TWELVE

SERMONS,

ON THE

ADVANTAGES

WHICH RESULT FROM

CHRISTIANITY;

AND ON THE

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

ON THE

MIND AND CONDUCT,

DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR THE USE OF FAMILIES.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

PHILANTHROPIC TRACTS:

CONSISTING OF

I.—AN ESSAY ON THE STATE OF THE POOR,

AND ON THE

MEANS OF IMPROVING IT BY PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS, FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, &c.

II.—RULES FOR FORMING AND CONDUCTING FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, TO FACILITATE THEIR GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

THE substance of the following DISCOURSES was delivered in the parish-church of Sunbury, Middlesex, more particularly at the anniversary meetings of two Friendly Societies of tradesmen and day-labourers, instituted for their mutual support, in cases of sickness, accident, or old age; and it is published with a view to diffuse, more widely, religious sentiments and moral principles among those who have little leisure and opportunity for the perusal of larger Theological works.

The Author's object, in referring the Reader to so many texts of Scripture, is, to make him more conversant with the Sacred writings; to strengthen and confirm his faith; and to enable him "to give a reason for the hope that is in "him *." He therefore recommends it to those

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

readers, whose instruction he has principally in view, to peruse these Sermons, at least, twice; the second time always referring, or causing some one in their families to turn, to the texts: And he hopes that the impression they make on their minds, will never be effaced.

The references, though they will be least observed by some, have cost him the most trouble. But it appears to him, that no denomination of Christians can well object to the mode here adopted; and that the fairest and best method of interpreting and understanding Scripture, is, to examine its whole tenor, and to follow the Apostolic rule of explaining one part by another, and "comparing spiritual things with "spiritual *."

At the request of several persons, for whose judgment the Author has the greatest respect, he has been induced to divide his late publication "*On the Advantages which result from "Christianity*" into several Sermons; to exhibit

* 1 Cor. ii. 13.

the

the doctrines, the evidences, the precepts, and the motives of our holy religion, in a regular order; and to make such additions, and new arrangements, as seemed most consistent with perspicuity.

The improvement of which the human mind is susceptible by culture and exercise, is certainly remarkable. But it is very material, especially when the texts are to be referred to, that the Sermons should not exceed the powers of an ordinary man's attention. In the obscure and humble walks of life, where simplicity of manners, and purity of morals, are generally to be found, every reader may not know where to divide a long discourse. And if it exceed his capacity of application and retention, he is discouraged, and is apt to suppose, that his faculties are not competent to the consideration of those important subjects, which tend, above all others, to improve his heart, to regulate his conduct, and to support him, amidst the many nameless and unavoidable distresses incident to human nature.

The Author once thought to omit the passages which relate to Friendly Societies, or to collect them into one discourse; but it occurred to him, that those occasional hints may be more likely to be read, and to induce some, and particularly the labouring classes of the community, to become members of such valuable institutions.

It may be proper to add that, in the Essay, many of the causes, which have combined to depress the understandings, and increase the miseries of the lower orders of society, are stated—Proper means of instruction, improvement, and relief, suggested—The beneficial effects of the Friendly Societies at Sunbury in reducing the poor's rates, and the importance of such societies to the public, as the means of preventing poverty, elucidated.——With observations on Female Benefit-Clubs.

Sunbury,
April, 1800.

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SERMON I.

EPHESIANS, v. 8.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of light.

THE religion, which our blessed Lord came to establish, has unquestionably enlightened the world, by revealing several important truths, which are unattainable by the best efforts of human wisdom. In this respect, as well as by the sublimity of its doctrines, the excellence of its laws, and the superiority of its motives, it is essentially distinguished from all other systems of religion.

In an age, therefore, when too many are inclined to shut their eyes against that divine

"light," which our Lord came to diffuse, it may be useful to consider,——The doctrines which he has revealed;——The precepts which he has inculcated;——and, The information which he has given, concerning the future destination of the human race.

These are not only very important, but very extensive subjects: all I propose to do is, to give, in this and in some subsequent discourses, a compendious view of them, in order to remind you of those principles and duties, which you have had frequent opportunities of hearing explained and enforced, at greater length, from the pulpit.

But, before I proceed to the discussion of these topics, it may not be improper to premise, that the style of Scripture is highly figurative *; and that this mode of diffusing knowledge, so prevalent among Oriental nations, was calculated to make the deepest impression on the mind, and was well adapted to the genius and manners of the people, to whom the sacred writings were

* John ii. 18—21; x. 9. 11; vi. 48—51; and xv. 1—5. Pſal. xviii. 2. 31; xci. 1. 4. Exod. xv. 3. 6. Ezek. xxxiv. 2. Iſa. xiv. 23. Matth. xiii. 3—23. 1 Cor. iii. 2. Rom. xiii. 12. &c.

originally

originally addressed. Objects of sense are often used to represent the qualities of the mind. Thus, in the metaphorical, impressive, and sublime, language of Scripture, *light* frequently denotes a state of knowledge and virtue; and *darkness*, a state of ignorance and vice *. Hence, the Christian dispensation is emphatically styled, by St. Peter, "a marvellous light †," to denote its transcendent purity and excellence; and, perhaps, no other image could so perfectly represent it to us.

The figurative expression, then, in the text, is intended to convey to us some idea of the ignorance, or spiritual "darkness," of mankind, before they were illuminated by the celestial beams of divine truth, and enjoyed the inestimable blessings, which we derive from the "light" of Christianity.

It may also be observed, that, about the time of our Saviour's appearance upon earth, there was a general expectation of the Messiah ‡, who was to effect a most astonishing change in the man-

* Rom. xiii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 4, 5. Luke i. 79. Matth. iv. 16. John iii. 19. xii. 46.

† 1 Pet. i. 9.

‡ Luke iii. 15. xix. 11. Mark xv. 43. John vii. 31. 40, 41.

ners, sentiments, and religious knowledge of mankind. Simeon, and Anna the Prophetess, with many other devout persons, "waited," with pious confidence and ardent expectation, "for the consolation of Israel *," and thought, from the predictions of the Prophets, and the "signs of the times," that "the kingdom of "God was at hand †." This was the great subject of comfort to them amidst all their distresses. Accordingly, when our Lord appeared, the doctrines which he taught, of the perfections and Providence of God, of the nature and duties of man, and of a future state of existence, were such as were unknown, even to the most celebrated writers of Greece and Rome; such as naturally led to, and could not fail to produce, a great improvement in the human condition. These doctrines, so wisely adapted for the instruction of the world, and so admirably illustrated by his example, made a happy change in the temper, the condition, and the views, of the primitive Christians. From being ignorant, idolatrous ‡, sensual, and dissolute, they became, on a sudden, enlightened, pious, tem-

* Luke ii. 25, 26. 36. 38. † Mark i. 15.
‡ Acts xvii. 16. 22—31. Rom. i. 22, 23.

perate,

perate, and virtuous. This wonderful change is expressed by the strongest figures of speech, as becoming "new men *," and "new creatures †;" and as passing from "darkness to "light ‡;" from a life of ignorance and depravity, to religious knowledge, to moral "goodness, righteousness, and truth §."

Now, though *we* enjoy the advantages of revelation, and have been instructed in those principles of religion and virtue, which tend to improve our hearts, and to civilize our manners; yet, let it never be forgotten, that every nation, unenlightened by Christianity, has been, and still continues to be, involved in deplorable ignorance and superstition, and addicted to the most savage customs, and immoral practices. At Ephesus, for instance, where the magnificent temple of Diana once stood, and whither vast numbers of pilgrims and devotees came to offer sacrifice at her famous shrine ‖; and in Phenicia, where Ashtaroth was worshipped ¶; we find that idolatry, and great dissoluteness o f

* Eph. iv. 24. † 2 Cor. v. 17.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 9. § Eph. v. 9.
‖ Acts xix. 24—28. 35. Eph. iv. 17—19, and Eph. i. 1—3.
¶ Judges ii. 13. Judges x. 6. 1 Kings xi. 33.

manners, were prevalent. Hence the Apostle of the Gentiles, with peculiar force and propriety, reminded the Ephesians of that wretched state of heathenism, irreligion, and vice, into which they had formerly been sunk; and of that glorious state of knowledge, virtue, piety, and salvation; of that spiritual peace, and those eternal blessings, vouchsafed to them, and to us, by the goodness of God, and through the merits of a Saviour. "Ye were formerly dark-"ness; but now ye are light in the Lord: "Walk as children of light *."————Let us,

I. Consider some of the doctrines, which Chistianity has revealed. The Christian religion teaches us, that all things were originally created, and are still governed, by that gracious and holy Being whom we adore †, and who is pos-

* The Eleusinian, or other heathen mysteries, which were here probably alluded to, seem to have depraved the morals of the initiated, and were communicated under the suspicious colour of secrecy; hence they are justly termed, in verse 11, "works of darkness." But the doctrines of Christianity have an opposite tendency: they enlighten our minds, meliorate our manners, and give us the highest ideas of the nature, the perfections, and the government, of the Deity. *Behave, then, as persons enlightened by Christianity: Let your principles appear, by the purity and lustre of your lives.*

† Gen. i. 1. Acts xiv. 15—17. Psal. cii. 25—27.

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sessed of infinite knowledge *, power †, wisdom ‡, and goodness §. It gives a most amiable and sublime description of all his perfections, but especially of his goodness; of which there is the most transcendent display. The beneficence of God is indeed diffused over all his works ||. You may trace it in the productions of nature, in the structure of the universe, in the government of the world; but, above all, in the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ ¶.

It is here important to observe, that the dictates of reason, as well as the declarations of Scripture, prove the truth of God's Providence and moral government, and shew that it extends to the most trivial, as well as the most important events; and that the meanest of his creatures are not despised, nor the smallest overlooked by him **.

* Heb. iv. 13. Psal. cxxxix. 1—12. Jer. xxiii. 24. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 1 Sam. ii. 3. † 1 Chron. xxix. 11.
‡ 1 Tim. i. 7. Psal. civ. 24. Psal. cxlvii. 5.
§ Psal. ciii. 11—17. Psal. cxxxvi. 1. James i. 17.
|| Psal. cxlv. 9. 15—19.
¶ John iii. 16, 17. 1 John iv. 8—10.
** Luke xii. 22—31. Matth. x. 29—31. Psal. xxxvi. 6, 7.

This doctrine, of which Christianity gives a clear and distinct view, is so important, and so consolatory to the mind, that it merits a separate consideration. Observe then the operations of nature, and the events of life. By the regular succession of day and night, sufficient time is allowed for our refreshment and repose; and, by the constant vicissitudes of the seasons, we see that the earth is fertilized, and the various productions of nature are brought to maturity *.

If we consider the *moral* government of God, we shall find that it is also wonderfully adapted to our various situations, capacities, and sentiments. All the events of life loudly proclaim that "the Lord reigneth †;" that, amidst the disorders and evils which take place in the world, he is carrying on his wise and good ends; that the course of human affairs is subservient to his direction and controul ‡; that virtue will be finally rewarded, and vice will terminate in misery.

* Acts xiv. 17. Gen. viii. 22.
† Psal. xcvii. 1. ‡ Psal. lxxvi. 10.

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These important truths, concerning God's agency and superintendence, might have been confirmed, both by sacred and civil history; but it will be unnecessary to dwell upon these proofs, as the Holy Scriptures, containing the revealed will of God, are in your possession: and your own experience will fully evince their truth.—Blessed with honest intentions, and an upright heart, and accustomed from your infancy to the many nameless comforts of an European life, you would be unhappy in the sandy deserts of Africa, or in the dreary wilds of America. Did you know how deeply some nations are immersed in ignorance and superstition, what horrid miseries and crimes prevail among them, you would feel the strongest emotions of gratitude to your Maker, that we live in a country, where we enjoy the most valuable blessings,—plenty *, domestic tranquillity, and the consolations of religion; and where, if it be not our own fault, we may make gradual improvement in knowledge, piety, and virtue.

Think not then that you are overlooked, or abandoned by the great Father of all, amidst

* This was written in the autumn of 1798.

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the immensity of his works; or that he is inattentive to the world, and its concerns. Like the sun in the heavens, he diffuses his goodness through the whole universe, and imparts to his creatures as much happiness as their natures are capable of admitting. If he bestow on you health of body, peace of mind, and the necessaries of life; if he afford you the opportunity of assembling together, and paying your devotions to him, you have reason to be thankful for these, and other instances of his goodness. Health is, indeed, a most valuable blessing, which; like other enjoyments, is too often undervalued, till it please God, by some severe but salutary dispensation, to withdraw the gift. But, if you are depressed, either with the apprehensions of some impending calamity, or with the immediate feelings of distress, let the knowledge and belief of a wise Providence, superintending every human event, and the consolatory prospect of an happy immortality, still animate your desponding heart *.—Remember, that afflictions are wisely designed for the trial and exercise of our faith and virtue †; and that

* 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. 2 Cor. v. 1.

† Heb. xii. 5—12. James i. 2—4. Prov. iii. 11, 12.

they

they have a tendency to soften the heart, to dispose it to receive religious impressions, and to make us more benevolent to our neighbours. Amidst all your sorrows and difficulties, consider the interpositions of Providence in your behalf, and reflect that your heavenly Father knows your grief, and the pressure of your afflictions; and, in his own good time and manner, will bring you out of all your trouble *. Above all, reflect on the stupendous scheme of our redemption, on the wonderful means employed, and the merciful designs it unfolds, and you will readily draw this conclusion, the result of all the valuable discoveries of the Gospel. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered "him up for us all, how shall he not with "him also freely give us all things †?"

You see then, that God's moral government is displayed to us, both by nature and revelation: From the contemplation of the works of nature ‡, we trace and acknowledge plain and evident marks of their ado-

* Psal. xlii. 11. Philip. iv. 6, 7. Rom. viii. 28.
† Rom. viii. 32. Eph. ii. 4—7.
‡ Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 20.

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rable Author; and, by the sublime "light" of revelation, we have the most striking manifestation of his wisdom and beneficence. Never allow yourselves, then, to imagine that there is *not* a God, whose Providence directs the world *; or that he is indifferent to order, regardless of our misfortunes, and inattentive to the efforts of those who are solicitous to please him; for, numberless are the proofs of his benignity, and of his moral government †. Look back on your past life, and many facts will recur ‡, which manifest the wisest and kindest purposes, and shew that he protects the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, and defeats the designs of the wicked §.

Now, as God is the Creator and Governor of the universe, and is continually employed in educing good from evil ‖; consider, next, what influence the doctrine of a gracious Providence should produce on our temper and conduct. Surely, it should teach us to cultivate the spirit

* Psal. lviii. 11.

† Psal. xxxiv. 3—10. 1 Pet. v. 7. Isa. xlix. 15.

‡ Psal. xxiii.

§ Psal. cxlvi. 9. Psal. x. 13, 14. Psal. lxviii. 5. Psal. xxii. 24, 26. Jer. xlix. 11.

‖ Gen. xlv. 4, 5. 8.

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of devotion *; it should excite our diligence and fidelity in that station in which he has placed us; and it should prove a most powerful motive to a cheerful obedience to his commands †; and a patient resignation to the various dispensations of Heaven, however severe ‡.

Having thus stated the doctrine of God's Providence and moral government, which, in the days of Paganism, was involved in impenetrable obscurity, we may observe, that human knowledge relates either to the material, or to the intellectual world. To investigate the laws and properties of the material world, is the object of natural philosophy. The works of nature enable us to discover in part the existence and perfections of their great Creator and Governor §, and excite admiration and praise in every rational mind. Our knowledge, however, of the immense chain and gradation of corporeal, and of immaterial beings, is very imperfect. Of the immaterial or spiritual world, the "light" of nature gives us no certain infor-

* Psal. lxxiii. 23—26. Col. i. 9—13. † Heb. xii. 1—3.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 19—21. Habak. iii. 17, 18. James v. 7, 8.
§ Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 19, 20. Acts xiv. 17.

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mation beyond an imperfect knowledge of the powers and operations of the human mind. Now, on this subject, Christianity teaches, that there are angels and good spirits, beings of a superior order, who do God's will in heaven, and are "ministring spirits to the heirs of salva-"tion *." And, however the doctrine may be derided, it leaves us no room to doubt the existence and agency of an insidious and malignant spirit, who seduced our first parents †, and still works, not only "in the children of "disobedience ‡," but assails the minds even of good men, and is an enemy to their virtue and happiness §. From the same unerring authority we learn, that the kingdom of "darkness" is to maintain, for a while, a violent struggle against the kingdom of "light;" but that the power and influence of Satan will gradually diminish, as the benevolent genius of Christianity displays itself, and true religion prevails ‖. "For this

* Heb. i. 14. Gen. xxviii. 10—12. Matt. vi. 10. Matt. xviii. 10. Psal. ciii. 20. Hab. ii. 14. Luke i. 19. Dan. iii. 28. Rev. vii. 11.

† Gen. iii. 1—19. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Heb. ii. 14. Rev. xii. 9. Matt. xxv. 41. ‡ Eph. ii. 2. John xiii. 2. 27.

§ Matt. xiii. 19. 38, 39. Matt. iv. 1. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

‖ Dan. vii. 13, 14. 27. Matt. xvi. 18. Rom. xvi. 20. Luke x. 17, 18.

"pur-

"purpose," says the Apostle, and with this merciful design, "the Son of God was mani-"fested, that he might destroy the works of the "devil *."

It is proper also to remark, that the Gospel teaches us, not only to resist the seductions of the devil †, but to beware of the temptations of the world ‡, the contagion of bad company §, and the evil propensities of our own hearts ‖. —Thus surrounded every where by dangers and difficulties, which are unforeseen in their nature, their number, and magnitude, let us, from a due consciousness of our own weakness, earnestly pray, that God would assist us in our passage through this life, and deliver us from the various snares and enemies which we have to encounter ¶. When we are about to leave the world, and all its delusive scenes, we shall see the vanity of those pursuits, which appear, at

* 1 John iii. 8.
† 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. James iv. 7. Eph. vi. 11, 12. 16.
‡ 1 John ii. 15—17. Rom. viii. 6. Rom. xii. 2.
§ 1 Cor. xv. 33. Prov. xiii. 20. Exod. xxiii. 2.
‖ Matt. xv. 19, 20. James i. 14. Prov. iv. 23.
¶ Matt. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 9.

present,

present, of such vast importance; and of those contentions and animosities, which so frequently disquiet and embitter human life *.

* Luke x. 41, 42.

SERMON

SERMON II.

EPHESIANS, v. 8.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of light.

THE great design of Christianity is, confessedly, to recover and redeem the human race from a state of moral depravity; and to prepare them, by a renovation and progressive improvement of their nature here, for a higher and more perfect state of existence hereafter *.

To effect this purpose, so worthy of God, and so beneficial to man, our Lord came and dis-

* Luke xix. 10. Rom. iii. 23. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 3—5.

pelled the clouds of ignorance and error *; taught the most sublime doctrines; and explained on what terms we may hope for eternal life †, and by what means our moral improvement may be promoted, and our final happiness secured.

He came also for *another* great end: to render the exercise of mercy consistent with the other attributes of the Deity; to make atonement for sin; and thereby to wash away the stain of moral guilt ‡. Had our Lord's assumption of human nature been solely for instruction, a subordinate being might have answered all the purpose. But the Scripture assures us, that he came for a higher design, to which every human being was inadequate: *he* came to be "the propitiation for our sins §." Accordingly, he is represented under two distinct and illustrious characters, as a Teacher ||, and as a Saviour ¶.

* Acts xxvi. 18; and iii. 26.
† Acts iii. 19; and x. 43. Matth. xix. 16—21.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
§ 1 John ii. 2. Rom. iii. 25.
|| John iii. 2. Matth. iv. 23; v. 2; and viii. 28, 29.
¶ Matth. i. 21. Acts iv. 12; and x. 43. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

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In order to make this appear, let it be observed, that our religion, equally friendly to the interests of mankind, and to the wishes of enlightened reason, has clearly instructed us in those great and important duties, which we owe to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves. We are called upon, by the most powerful motives, to attend to its doctrines and precepts, and to endeavour, at all times, to regulate our lives by the pure and benevolent principles which it inculcates *.

Let it also be observed, that, to the devout mind, Christianity appears to be a stupendous dispensation of mercy, gradually revealed, and ultimately terminating in the redemption of the world †. As "the wages of sin is death," so it shews, that "the gift of God is eternal life, "through Jesus Christ our Lord ‡." It inculcates love to our Creator §; faith in our Redeemer ‖; and an habitual dependence on the influence of God's Holy Spirit ¶. It forms

* Rom. ii. 7—11. † 1 John iv. 9, 10.
‡ Rom. vi. 23. § Matth. xxii. 37.
‖ 1 John iii. 23. Acts xvi. 30, 31.
¶ Rom. viii. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xii. 4—6.

our minds to gratitude, humility, and devotion.

With this view, it has given us a concise and comprehensive form of prayer*, highly adapted to our wants, and proper to be used in all our addresses to the throne of grace and mercy. Every morning and evening †, we should thank God for our existence, our powers, and faculties; for all the blessings of this life, and all our hopes of a better. We should implore his pardon for all our offences, and should pray for his gracious assistance to enable us to discharge the several duties of our station. We should solicit the continuance of his mercy and protection, and should beg of him to bestow on us what is good, and to preserve us from evil ‡. Amidst the various occupations of life, you have, all of you, time to offer up a short prayer, or a silent ejaculation to him; and thus you may cultivate and preserve a devout temper of mind §; and live under an habitual sense of the divine presence and inspection ‖. This spirit of devotion would guard you against vice;

* Matth. vi. 6. 9—13. † Psal. v. 3; and cxli. 2.
‡ Matth. vii. 7. 10. Luke xxi. 36.
§ Acts x. 1, 2. Col. iv. 2.
‖ Psal. cxxxix. 1—12.

and

and would dispose you to act with propriety in that station, which Providence has wisely assigned you *. It would inspire humility; it would sweeten the disposition; it would quiet the passions; it would promote benevolence. And, among other advantages, it would deter you from the impious practice, which some have, of cursing and swearing in common conversation †; or of ever daring to use God's sacred name, but with impressions of the most profound veneration and awe ‡. — Let God, then, be worshipped in all your families, and his name hallowed; that is, honoured, revered. And, to cherish pious emotions and to encourage your devotion, you need only be reminded, that the Lord is nigh unto all that "call upon "him; yea, all such as call upon him in "truth §."

Whoever attends to the excellence and singular nature of Christianity, will perceive, that it is an astonishing display of God's "eternal pur-

* Phil. iv. 6, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 1—3.

† Matth. v. 34—37. James v. 12. Exod. xx. 7.

‡ Psal. xcix. 3; and cxi. 9.

§ Psal. cxlv. 18. James v. 16. Luke xi. 5—10; and xviii. 1—8.

" pose *" for man's salvation, and that it is the noblest subject of contemplation, in which the human mind can be engaged. It elucidates and enforces the law of nature, and impresses us with the importance and necessity of revelation †. From revelation alone we see the love of the Father, the intercession of the Son, and the influence of the Holy Spirit ‡, all combining to effect the gracious plan of our redemption; though in a manner which, from our finite conceptions, we cannot thoroughly understand §. For the comfort of those, who feel the imperfections and depravity of their nature, and earnestly implore the Divine assistance, we are taught, that God's Holy Spirit will illuminate their minds ‖, invigorate their resolutions, and assist their endeavours, in the conscientious discharge of all moral and religious duties. " Work " out your own salvation," says the Apostle, never forgetting, at the same time, that " it " is God who worketh in us both to will and to " do ¶." Here the distinct operations of Divine grace, and of human liberty, are clearly marked

* 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. 1 John v. 11. † Rom. viii. 3.
‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 2; and iii. 18. Eph. ii. 18.
§ Job xi. 7. Psal. cxxxix. 6.
‖ 2 Cor. iv. 6; and iii. 18. ¶ Philip. ii. 12, 13.

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out, to prevent despair or presumption. Now, this doctrine of Divine assistance, which Christianity has confirmed *, by no means supersedes our exertions; nor is it inconsistent with the free agency of man, without which actions cannot be either morally good or bad. It is, in fact, most congenial to the unbiassed dictates of nature; and, however perverted or misrepresented, is our great consolation amidst the various difficulties incident to a state of trial.

This subject may be farther illustrated by a striking instance, of the truth of which we have the clearest evidence. The husbandman, we know, must manure and plough his fields, must sow and reap his corn, before he can expect any increase to preserve his life, or nourish his body. And after he has used his utmost exertions, he must still depend on the blessing of God, who sends seasonable weather, refreshing showers, and the genial heat of the sun, to invigorate the soil, to cherish the grain, and to

* John xv. 4, 5; xiv. 15—19; and xvi. 13. Luke xi. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 Cor. x. 13. Tit. iii. 5. Gal. v. 22, 23. Eph. iii. 16. John iii. 5—8.

bring it forward to maturity *.—Now, the same wise order, the same gracious œconomy, pervades the kingdom of grace, as well as of nature. To the influence of God's Spirit, which is offered to us if we sincerely ask it, we must add our own endeavours †. All this shews, that we are capable of moral and religious improvement; and that Divine Grace is not imparted to us to supersede, but to assist, the exertions of our own natural powers, which, by the fall of man, are greatly impaired and perverted.

Let it be farther considered then, that the Gospel is peculiarly calculated to afford proper encouragement and relief amidst the external distresses, and internal sorrows, of human nature. Though the offer of salvation was indiscriminately made by our Lord to all ranks of men, high and low, rich and poor; yet, as was predicted of him ‡, it was to the illiterate and indigent he chiefly addressed his discourses §. Accordingly, Christianity is particularly described as a dispensation of "glad tidings *to the*

* James v. 7. Psal. lxv. 9—13. † 2 Pet. i. 5—8.
‡ Isa. lxi. 1. § Matth. xi. 25. ‖ Cor. i. 26. James ii. 5.

"*poor*;"

"*poor**;" to "the poor in spirit†," in external circumstances, and in religious knowledge. And, what is a very material consideration, it is evidently designed to alleviate the burden of human woe, and to shew that God is ever disposed to help and relieve the distressed‡.

As a matter of the most serious concern to us all, it is repeatedly and pointedly urged by the sacred writers, that there is a day approaching, in which "the heavens, being on fire, shall "be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with "fervent heat§;" when "the dead, both small "and great, shall stand before the tribunal of "Christ‖;" when the Son of Man, invested with his Father's glory, shall come with his angels, and recompense every one according to his actions¶; and when "the wicked shall go "into eternal punishment: but the righteous "into eternal life**." Such grand and awful representations, which the Scripture gives us, of the dissolution of the world, of a future judg-

* Luke iv. 18. † Matth. v. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. Psal. x. 17, 18; xviii. 6; xxii. 4, 5. 24. 26; xxxiv. 6. 10. 17—19; lxviii. 5; lxxii. 12; cii. 17; and cxlvi. 6—9.

§ 2 Pet. iii. 10—14.

‖ Rev. xx. 12. Rom. xiv. 10. Acts xvii. 30, 31.

¶ Matth. xvi. 27. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

** Matth. xxv. 46.

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ment *, and of man's final destination, are wisely designed to prepare us for so tremendous a scene, by an habitual government of the heart, and regulation of the conduct. But, to the consideration of a future state, a topic, of all others, the most interesting to us, we shall again have occasion to revert.

Allow me, however, to call your thoughts here to an event, which is fast approaching to us all, and will prove of the same effect with "the day of judgment." Christianity often reminds us of the shortness and uncertainty of life †, of the instability of human events, and of that awful period, when we shall enter into "the valley of the shadow of death ‡," and shall be removed to another world; where we shall be rewarded "according to the deeds done "in the body, whether good or bad §." This sentiment, which the Christian revelation perpetually inculcates, and the voice of nature loudly proclaims, cannot but touch every considerate heart. How careful should it make you to guard against every vice; to cultivate every virtue; and to improve the time, which cannot

* Matth. xxv. 31—46. John v. 28, 29.
† Luke xii. 20, 21. James iv. 13—15. 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.
‡ Psal. xxiii. 4. § 2 Cor. v. 10.

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be recalled! Your fathers have answered the wise purpose of Providence in their creation, and are now laid in the dust *; and, when *your* time of trial is concluded, you will follow them. —" Watch, therefore; for in such an hour as " you think not, the Son of Man cometh †." Let it be deeply impressed on all our hearts, that this life is short and uncertain, and that we are placed here in a state of trial for eternity. Let this serious and most important truth be continually recurring to our minds, and let it never be our condemnation, that the amusements or occupations of life so entirely engaged our attention, that we thought not of higher and nobler concerns.

As this life is a state of moral probation for fallen and degenerate creatures, it accounts for that mixture of happiness and misery, of virtue and vice, which prevails in the world; and for that imperfect and unequal distribution of good and evil, at which we are too apt to repine. You all know that God has entrusted us with various talents ‡, and requires us to improve them by employing our time, our substance,

* Zech. i. 5, 6.

† Matth. xxiv. 42. 44.

‡ Matth. xxv. 14—30. Luke xix. 11—27. 2 Cor. viii. 12.

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our faculties, and our influence, in advancing his glory, and the happiness of our fellow-creatures. This is a point of so much importance, and, it is to be feared, so little regarded, that it may be proper, on this occasion, to press it more particularly upon your attention.

Were I to take a survey of man, through the different regions of the globe, and trace the various gradations of religious knowledge, from the total ignorance of the mere savage, through a gradual progression, to the African, the Indian, and the Mahometan, till we ascend, at last, to the enlightened Christian, enjoying the blessings of revelation, and of civilized life, you would be deeply impressed with the superior excellence of Christianity, which has conveyed the most important information to man; and has introduced the most beneficial changes into the state of society.

While the untutored Indians live in ignorance of the great doctrines of religion, and have only the dictates of uncultivated reason, and the suggestions of natural conscience, to regulate their conduct, you, my brethren, enjoy peculiar blessings, both civil and religious, for which you must be accountable. Enlightened by the principles of Christianity, and animated with the hopes

hopes of future existence, you have daily opportunities of improving in piety and virtue, and are enabled to perform all those great and essential duties, which your various stations and occupations in life require.—"Let your light," then, "so shine before men, that they may see "your good works, and glorify your Father, "who is in heaven *." Though this scriptural injunction be particularly applicable to those, who are raised to eminent situations, and whose sphere of duty, and of usefulness, is proportionably increased; yet the influence of every man's example is much greater than perhaps may be imagined. It is true, most of you are in humble stations, and cannot make great progress in the pursuits of science, or the acquisition of knowledge; but, amidst the common incidents of life, you should remember, that you may all be mild and peaceable, forgiving and obliging, inoffensive and pure in heart. God has made you, no less than the rich and the great †, susceptible of virtue, of the comforts of society, and of the pleasures of devotion. He has bestowed on you the same freedom of action, and of sentiment; the same light of reason, the same

* Matth. v. 16.

† Prov. xxii. 2.

sense

sense of rectitude, the same hope of heaven. And he has blessed you with health of body, peace of mind, domestic harmony, and that share of religious knowledge, which may support you through a laborious life, and conduct you to a better world.

Though a distinction of rank is essential to the existence of society *, yet, let it ever be remembered, that you are all equally responsible to Providence for the blessings you enjoy; that the Governor of the world is attentive to the part you are now acting; and that the condition of the virtuous peasant, or industrious mechanic, is more respectable, and more happy, than that of the man, however wealthy, or however elevated his station, who is enslaved to sensual appetites and criminal luxury, and inattentive to religious and moral obligation †.

We have a lively description of the awful consequences of an irreligious life, and of an ungrateful perversion of the gifts of Providence, in the parable of the rich man in the Gospel ‡. He seems to have enjoyed every blessing, which

* Deut. xv. 11. Mark xiv. 7.

† Isa. lvii. 20, 21; and xxxii. 17. John viii. 34. Rom. vi. 16. Mark x. 24, 25. 2 Pet. ii. 19.

‡ Luke xvi. 19—31.

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this world could bestow: he fared sumptuously; he dressed magnificently; he lived in the greatest splendour. But what was the consequence of addicting himself merely to worldly pursuits; and of making his riches subservient to the gratification of his sensual passions? This is emphatically represented in the evangelical history: "He died, and was buried; *and in hell "he lift up his eyes being in torments* *."—Let this awful representation, then, shew men the true value of riches, and teach them to employ their wealth in pious, charitable, and useful purposes. Let it guard the rich against placing their happiness in worldly pleasures; and excite the poor to sustain their present trials and afflictions with fortitude, and to be resigned to the dispensations of Providence. And let it teach us all, both rich and poor, to be thankful for the blessings we enjoy; to study that we do not pervert them to the worst purposes; and to remember, that riches cannot ward off every evil, nor procure for us every valuable enjoyment.

By frugal industry, peaceable manners, conjugal fidelity, and the influence of religion, you and your families live contented and happy in your

* Luke xvi. 23.

cottages,

cottages, and are useful in the world; but, you may be assured, that this would be far from being the case, if you neglected the proper duties of your station, if you degraded your nature by immoral practices, and if you were not humble, benevolent, and upright, in private life. Ever, then, cultivate innocence, virtuous "simplicity" of manners, and "godly sincerity *;" and guard against drunkenness †, sourness of temper, and party-disputes. Remember, that Christianity inculcates supreme love for God ‡, and cheerful contentment with your lot §; represses undue solicitude respecting earthly treasures ‖; and directs you to aspire after the splendours of another world, designed for you in the realms of eternal "light" and peace ¶.

* 2 Cor. i. 12. † Luke xxi. 34. Prov. xxiii. 21.
‡ Luke x. 27. § 1 Tim. vi. 6—8. Heb. xiii. 5.
‖ Matth. vi. 19—21; and 24—34. Luke xii. 15—34. 1 Pet. v. 7. John vi. 27. Matth. xvi. 26.
¶ Col. iii. 1, 2. Luke x. 38—42.

SERMON

SERMON III.

EPHESIANS, v. 8.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of light.

WE have already had occasion to consider several religious and moral subjects, with a view to improve your Christian knowledge, and to influence your daily practice. And, since the leading principles of Christianity, as they are delineated in the New Testament, are the clearest, the most sublime, the most important, the most interesting, and the most consolatory to the devout mind, it is to be hoped, they will engage your utmost attention, and make the deepest impression on you. They shew, in the

most striking manner, and with a force not easily to be resisted, the infinite value and importance of religion and virtue, and the extreme folly and danger of impiety and vice *.

It is well known, notwithstanding all the recent discoveries of science, that the works of Nature are but imperfectly explored; and that their properties, and the laws that obtain in the material world, are not sufficiently investigated, by the researches even of the most learned and inquisitive philosophers †.—In the same manner, with respect to some of the articles of the Christian faith, it need not excite our wonder, that there should also be mysteries, which are inscrutable to human wisdom, and that many things are revealed to us in Scripture, of which we have but an imperfect comprehension. Nor, with the limited faculties which we enjoy, can it be urged as an objection to revelation ‡, that we are unable to fathom "the depths of the "wisdom and knowledge of the Most High §; "of him "who is, and who was, and who is "to come———the Almighty ‖." The fall of man—his redemption from sin—the efficacy of

* Matth. xvi. 26. † Psal. civ. 24, 25.
‡ Deut. xxix. 29. § Rom. xi. 33. ‖ Rev. i. 8.

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our Lord's death and intercession—the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins—the influence of Divine grace—the rejection of the Jews for a time *—the admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church †—the resurrection of the body—the immortality of the soul—and the certainty of a future and eternal state of retribution:—These, these are the solemn and momentous truths, which the Apostle might well call "the "mysteries, which had been hid from ages and "generations; but were then made manifest by "the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ‡." These evangelical doctrines, which unassisted reason could never have discovered, are powerful motives to a religious life; their obvious tendency being, to increase our reverence for the principles of the Christian faith, and to enforce the duties of our respective stations.

To promote the interests of Christianity, and of civil society, and to improve the energy of the mind, the Scriptures farther instruct us, that, while you are to be employed six days in discharging the arduous duties of your station, you

* Matth. xxi. 33—43; and xxii. 1—8.

† Psal. ii. 8. John x. 16. Matth. xx. 1—16. Acts xi. 18. Eph. iii. 5, 6. Isa. ii. 2, 3. Mal. i. 11.

‡ Col. i. 26, 27. Eph. i. 9, 10. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Cor. ii. 7.

are to devote the seventh to the worship and service of Almighty God; and to the acquisition of those moral and religious truths, which raise in the heart a due veneration for the Deity, and will best fortify you against those loose principles and vicious practices which so much prevail *.

It will be admitted, by every serious and well-informed mind, that all the knowledge, which the labouring classes of the people have of God and religion, may principally be attributed to the wise and humane institution of the Sabbath, to those occasional cessations from the toils of life, which God has, in great mercy, enjoined; and that their civilization, their improvement, and chief comfort, may be traced to the blessed opportunities, which they thereby enjoy, of comparing their actions with the rules prescribed in the Bible; of contemplating the works of Creation and Redemption; of withdrawing their attention from the business and cares of life; of reflecting on a future state of existence; and of improving their nature, in order to be rendered "meet for the inheritance

* Gen. ii. 1—3. Exod. xvi. 22. 30; xx. 8—11; and xxiii. 12. Jer. xvii. 21, 22. 24—27. Nehem. viii. 1—8. Ezek. xx. 12. Matth. xii. 1—8. Mark ii. 27, 28.

"of

" of the saints in light *."——" Remember," therefore, " the Sabbath day to keep it holy †." Remember, that the sacred truths, which are then inculcated, are admirably calculated to promote piety, benevolence, and contentment, among the various ranks of society; that they afford the greatest comfort in prosperity, as well as under the unavoidable afflictions of life ‡; and that they will never fail, through the Divine blessing, to make a lasting impression on those, whose minds are not pre-occupied with other and less important objects. In an age, in which every effort is made to contaminate the principles, and corrupt the morals, of all ranks of people, and every method is employed to propagate doctrines subversive of the peace of society, and even to make men believe, that there is no God, no Providence, and no future state, you ought to be thankful, that you and your children are taught those great doctrines and duties of the Gospel, which tend to counteract such pernicious and gloomy principles; and that you are blessed with that religious information, which may make you " wise unto

* Col. i. 12. † Exod. xx. 8.
‡ Matth. xi. 28—30. Acts xx. 6, 7.

"salvation *."—I beseech you, then, never, under any pretence, mis-spend that most precious portion of your time in intemperance and vice, in idle amusements, in convivial meetings, or in the pursuits of worldly gain †. But seriously recollect the sacred purposes for which the Lord's day was designed. Treat it with respect, as "a day of rest to be kept holy "to the Lord ‡;" and let it be devoted to the duties of Divine worship, of religious improvement, and of Christian benevolence.

As a further inducement to maintain steady and consistent characters, it may not be useless here to add, that, wherever the genuine doctrines of Christianity are neglected, that neglect will produce impiety, dishonesty, and dissoluteness of manners. But, if the essential principles of religion and morality are inculcated and imbibed, the gloom of ignorance will be gradually dispelled; the love of truth, of virtue, and of devotion, will increase; liberal and useful arts will be cultivated and advanced; and a further reformation in the manners, the views, and the morals of mankind, will take place.

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

† Isa. lviii. 13, 14. Matth. xviii. 20.

‡ Exod. xxxi. 15—17.

Deeply

Deeply is it to be lamented, that many of the lower ranks of society still continue in gross ignorance; it is, however, to be hoped, that a time will come, when Parochial Schools will be established, and proper means used, to disseminate, more effectually, the principles and the practice of piety, probity, benevolence, and sobriety, among the rising generation. In the mean time, it is earnestly recommended to you, as you value your children's happiness, to use your utmost efforts to give them such a degree of knowledge, and especially of religious knowledge, as will tend to check the progress of ignorance and immorality; will qualify them for fulfilling the duties of their station *; and will prove a great comfort to you in the decline of life.

From this general view of the fundamental articles of our Christian belief, you will be able to understand, that the merciful intention of our Lord's mission was, to enlighten the understanding, and improve the heart; to give us just notions of God's Providence, and moral government; to reclaim us from vice, and its fatal consequences †; to teach us for what important

* Prov. xxii. 6. † Luke xv. 11—32.

purposes we were sent into the world; to unfold the mysteries of redemption, the nature and laws of his kingdom *, and the causes and consequences of his sufferings and death †; to explain to us how we may obtain the pardon of sin, and the inestimable gift of eternal life and happiness; and, at last, to die for the salvation of mankind ‡.

A revelation then, that explains to us the nature of God and man; that opens to us the great plan of Providence in the administration of the world; that renders the duties of religion more easy §, and obvious to the lowest capacity; that dispels the clouds of "darkness" and error, in which human nature was enveloped; and that exhibits "the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God ‖;" I say, such a revelation must be highly useful and beneficial to us.

Now, from all this it follows, that the doctrines of Christianity, from their peculiar importance and sublimity, claim your most serious

* Luke xvii. 20, 21. John xviii. 36. Luke xxii. 24—27. Matth. xviii. 1—4; and xx. 20—27. Rom. xiv. 17.

† Matth. xvi. 21; xvii. 22, 23; xx. 17—19. 28; and xxvi. 28. Mark ix. 9, 10; xiv. 24. Luke ix. 30, 31. John iii. 14, 15; xiii. 8. Luke xxiv. 45—47.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 3. 2 Cor. v. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

§ Matth. xi. 28—30. 1 John v. 3. ‖ Rom. xi. 33.

regard,

regard. But, for farther information about them, let me again intreat you, whatever be your rank in life, to go regularly, every Sunday, to the place appropriated to divine worship; to attend to those solemn calls to devotion, and religious instruction *; and to study to be among the number of those devout Christians, who, as our Saviour terms it, in "an honest and "good heart, having heard the word, retain it, "and bring forth fruit with perseverance †." And let me earnestly recommend, on that sacred day, a careful perusal of your Bible; and especially of the New Testament.

Improving in almost every other branch of knowledge, it is to be lamented, that we are so little acquainted with the Scriptures. The Sacred volume is peculiarly calculated to elevate our minds, to improve our morals, to excite our hopes, and to alarm our fears. What renders it truly invaluable, and distinguishes it from all other writings, is this: it contains "the words "of eternal life ‡," the inestimable treasure of divine knowledge; and is, in a pre-emi-

* Heb. x. 23—25. James i. 22. Psal. v. 7.
† Luke viii. 15.
‡ John vi. 68; v. 39. 1 John ii. 25.

nent

nent sense, the infallible standard of celestial truth *. It shews the being and perfections of God, the origin and end of man. It directs and enjoins us to raise our affections above the transient enjoyments of this life, to that permanent happiness, which awaits good men in a future state †. And, amidst the great mutability of human affairs, it conveys to us such useful and important instructions, as deserve very peculiar attention and consideration.

Let it here be observed, that Moses, and the subsequent Prophets in the Old Testament, and the Evangelists and Apostles in the New, have taught mankind those doctrines and precepts, those revelations and laws, which contain the most valuable information that could be communicated to man. And, that the doctrines, the duties, and the promises of religion, might be known, and preserved to all future ages, without any mixture of error, let it be remembered, that they were committed to writing by the sacred penmen, under the infallible direction of God's Holy Spirit ‡. By these means, religious truths are preserved in their genuine

* John xvii. 17. Eph. i. 13.

† Col. iii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 19—21. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

purity;

purity; and in all theological controversies, recourse may be had "to the word of God*," to the pure fountain from whence all our religious knowledge is derived.—Let it also be added, that God has wisely appointed a permanent order of men, to instruct mankind in the great truths of religion, and to administer its holy ordinances.——Be regular, then, in your attendance every Sunday in hearing the word of God read and explained by your minister†. And let your opinions be formed from an attentive and frequent perusal of your Bible. On all occasions adhere to it as the grand rule, which should form your Christian faith, and regulate your practice‡. Read it with serious and candid minds§, and thereby endeavour to imbibe the spirit of genuine piety. This will gradually instil into your hearts the love of God, and the love of man‖. It will effectually guard you against a desperate unconcern about your future

* Luke viii. 11. Heb. iv. 12.

† Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Luke x. 16. Eph. iv. 11—13. 1 Tim. iv. 12—16. 1 Cor. ix. 7. 9. 11. 13. 14. Rom. x. 14, 15. Acts xx. 17, 18. 28. 1 Pet. v. 1—4. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Heb. xiii. 7. 17.

‡ Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 11.

§ John v. 39. ‖ Matth. xxii. 34—40. 1 John iv. 21.

state;

state; it will fortify your minds against all losses and distresses; and it will not only increase your religious knowledge, but prove to you a source of joy, of hope, and of consolation.

Before we conclude, it may be observed, in proof of the divine religion which we profess, that many striking evidences might be adduced from *prophecy* *; from the accomplishment of various remarkable events, which, through a long series of ages, had been predicted, but which could not be foreseen by the greatest human sagacity.—It may also be remarked, that the stupendous and well-attested *miracles* which our Lord wrought †, and the power which he displayed, in confirmation of his divine mission and character ‡, were the accomplishment of those predictions, which relate to the birth §,

* Luke xxiv. 26, 27. † John x. 25. 38.

‡ John xx. 30, 31. John i. 45. Matth. xi. 2—6.

§ Compare Isa. ix. 2. 6, 7; vii. 14; with Luke i. 26—38. Matth. i. 18—25, and John i. 14; Mal. iv. 2, with Luke i. 76—79, and ii. 8—14; Jerem. xxxi. 15, with Matth. ii. 16—18.

the

the life *, the doctrines, the death †, the resurrection ‡, the functions of the Messiah; and to the beneficial tendency of his religion §. But on these sublime and extensive subjects, though they be most pleasing and consolatory to the human mind, we cannot enter at present ‖.

* Compare here some of the prophecies of the Old Testament, with our Lord's history in the New. Compare Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, with Luke vii. 19—23; Isa. lxi. 1—3, with Luke iv. 14—21; Isa. vii. 9, 10, with Matth. xiii. 10—17; Isa. xlii. 1—4, with Matth. xii. 14—21; Zech. ix. 9, with Matth. xxi. 1—9, and John xii. 12—16; Psal. lxxviii. 2, with Matth. xiii. 34, 35; Isa. xxviii. 16, and Psal. cxviii. 22, with Matth. xxi. 40—44, Acts iv. 8—12, and 1 Pet. ii. 6—8.

† Compare Isa. xl. 11, with John x. 11; Zech. xi. 12, 13. with Matth. xxvii. 3—10; Zech. xii. 10, with John xix. 34. 37; Psal. xxii. 1. 8. 16—18, with Matth. xxvii. 46. 43. 35; Psal. xli. 9, with Mark xiv. 17—21, and John xiii. 18, 19; Isa. liii. 3—5, with Matth. viii. 16, 17; Isa. liii. 7, with Matth. xxvii. 12. 14; Isa. liii. 9, with Matth. xxvii. 57—60; Isa. liii, 12, with Mark xv. 27, 28; Isa. l. 6, with Matth. xxvi. 67; Psal. lxix, 21, with John xix. 28—30; Psal. lxviii. 18, with Eph. iv. 7, 8; Psal. cx. 1. 4, with Matth. xxii. 41—46, and Heb. v. 5, 6; Jonah i. 17, with Matth. xii. 38—40, and xvi. 4.

‡ Compare Psal. xvi. 8—10, Isa. liii. 10, and Hos. vi. 2, with Luke xxiv. 13—47, Acts ii. 24—36, and 1 Cor. xv. 4—8.

§ Isa. ii. 4. Isa. xi. 6—9.

‖ See Sermon V.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

JOHN i. 17.

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

THE Mosaic dispensation was intended to prepare mankind for that "spiritual kingdom *," which our Lord came to establish. But the Jews, who were always a worldly-minded people, looked only for temporal blessings; imagined that the Messiah was to be a great and powerful prince †; and had no higher ideas, than to be rescued from the

* John xviii. 36.

† Mark x. 35—40. Matth. xxvii. 42. Acts i. 6.

Roman

Roman yoke. This preconceived notion of a temporal sovereign, and their fond hopes of sharing in his conquests and glory, was the principal cause of their rejection of the Gospel *.

The Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Christ, reflect great light on each other; they proceed from the same Author, and have the same grand design, the same benevolent tendency—the reformation and salvation of the world by Jesus Christ.——We are to observe, that the temporal deliverances of the Jews under the Law, were all of them typical of the spiritual and eternal blessings of the Gospel. And it ought not to be forgotten, that, besides the primary and literal meaning of prophecy, and of prophetic types, there is a secondary, and more sublime sense. Under the veil of temporal, we behold spiritual blessings promised, which were peculiarly consolatory to the pious. This mode of conveying religious truth was well adapted to the worldly expectations of the Jews. Accordingly the prophets frequently take occasion, from some temporal blessing, to give intimations of future blessings relative to the Messiah's kingdom. Thus, for instance, the deliverance of God's

* John vi. 15. 1 Cor. i. 22—24. Matth. xxiv. 3. 30. Compared with Dan. vii. 13, 14.

people

people from the Babylonian captivity is not only foretold by Isaiah; but he uses, at the same time, the most beautiful and sublime images to adumbrate, or shadow out, a redemption of infinitely greater importance to the human race—the redemption of mankind from the captivity of sin and death, through the interposition of the Messiah *.

In the same manner, when we read † that, in consequence of the frequent rebellions of the children of Israel against God, the brazen serpent was erected by Moses in the wilderness, to stop the divine wrath, and to heal the poison of serpents; this is mentioned by our Saviour himself in the evangelical history, as a representation of his crucifixion and atonement. "As "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that "whosoever believeth on him may not perish, "but have everlasting life ‡."

Considered by themselves, many of the Jewish institutions appear imperfect §, and not easily

* Compare Isa. xl. 1—11. with Matth. iii. 1—3. Luke iii. 3—6. 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.; Isa. lii. 7. with Rom. x. 15.; Isa. vii. 10—16. with Matth. i. 18—23.

† Numb. xxi. 4—9. ‡ John iii. 14.

§ Heb. vii. 19. Rom. viii. 3.

to be accounted for; but connected, as we know them to be, with a purer and spiritual system *, and as bearing a relation to the vast and wonderful plan, which extends from the creation of the world to its dissolution, they assume great dignity, as well as consistency, when they anticipated a celestial "kingdom, which should "have no end †." The law was of a partial nature, and of a limited duration ‡: and, in that grand æra, styled in Scripture "the ful-"ness of time §," was always designed to give way to the Gospel ‖."—The law was promulgated with such awful pomp and tremendous majesty, as to strike terror into the mind ¶, and thereby evinced its nature, which denounced death on the violator of its precepts. But the Gospel breathes a milder spirit, and was ushered in with these gracious and memorable words, "peace on earth, good-will towards men **." The benign dispensation of the Gospel has not only a tendency to promote the general interests of mankind, but that internal peace, that tranquillity of mind, which arises from our being at

* John iv. 23.
† Luke i. 33. Dan. ii. 44.
‡ Gal. iii. 19—27.
§ Gal. iv. 4.
‖ Luke xvi. 16.
¶ Exod. xix. 16—18.
** Luke ii. 14.

peace

peace with God, with the world, and with ourselves.

Were we to enter into a minute comparison between the law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ, we should see, in some instances, a striking coincidence between both these institutions; at other times we should mark a characteristic difference *. To a devout mind it would not be deemed useless, to contemplate the wonderful steps of Providence for the salvation of mankind, as they are gradually marked in Scripture, and as the intimations of a Messiah, and of redemption through him, became clearer and stronger; to trace, through a succession of ages, and through the veil of symbolical language, all the types, ceremonies, and prophecies, which relate to the birth, the life, the death, and the religion of the Messiah †; to point out the moral and spiritual nature of the Gospel, in opposition to the punctilious observance of legal ordinances; to shew the superiority of the Christian over the Mosaic religion, in the purity of its doctrines, and the clearness and excellence of its precepts, in the sublime ideas it gives us of the attributes of the Deity, in its enlarged sentiments of benevolence, in the

* Acts xiii. 38, 39. † 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Luke xxiv. 45—47.

nature of its promises and consolations *, and in the evidences of a future state. But the immensity of the subject, and the brevity of my plan, equally restrain me from the attempt.——What has been already remarked, will shew you the value and blessings of the Gospel, and the truth of our Lord's assertion, that "he came not to "subvert the law or the prophets," but to ratify and explain them †. It will also evince, that there is one grand scheme, which runs through the whole Bible, to which every other plan of Providence appears subservient: that plan is comprehended in the predictions concerning the Messiah, the nature of his kingdom, and the grand mystery of our redemption.

Now, from these general observations on the spirit of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, it cannot but occur, that, in the Jewish ritual, the Hebrew believer was burdened with a multiplicity of rites and ceremonies. God, for wise purposes, imposed those external observances; and men, in all ages, have been too prone to substitute them in the place of piety and true goodness. But the dispensation of the Gospel, that last and most perfect revelation of the divine

* Gal. vi. 9. John xiv. 1—3. Matth. xxv. 34. Rom. ii. 7. Rev. ii. 7. iii. 5. 21. † Matth. v. 17.

will,

will, has introduced a more rational, sublime, and spiritual mode of worship *.——Our Lord has instituted only two simple and solemn ordinances, which are extremely significant, and highly proper to represent some of the great truths of the Christian faith. It may be necessary to explain to you the nature and benefit of both these institutions.—By baptism, we are admitted into the church of Christ; and by sprinkling the body with water is emblematically represented that cleansing of the soul from vice, that regeneration or change of nature, and that purity of heart and life, without which our Christian profession will be of no avail †.—Hence when you see a child baptized, parents should consider, that it is their duty to press upon their children the great truths of religion and virtue, and particularly to infuse such principles as will regulate their practice. And others, who do not stand in the important relation of a parent, should seriously consider the nature of baptism, its important design, and the obligation

* John i. 17. Heb. viii. 6. Matth. xi. 28—30.

† Matth. xxviii. 18—20. Acts ii. 37—41. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Acts viii. 36—38. Rom. vi. 3—6. Heb. x. 22. John iii. 1—5. Luke xi. 37—41. Mark x. 13—16. xvi. 15, 16. 1 Cor. x. 1—4. Col. ii. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

which it imposes on all present, to behave suitably to their Christian profession *, to extirpate every bad habit, and to form their minds to sanctity, to humility, to the love of God, and to the most ardent and expansive benevolence. For the object of true religion, be it ever remembered, is our improvement in faith and purity. To this purpose tend all the doctrines, which our Saviour and his Apostles taught, all the precepts they enjoined, all the motives they urged, and all the ceremonies they instituted.

This leads us to the consideration of the other Christian ordinance. By the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, under the familiar but expressive symbols of bread and wine, we are reminded of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which result from it; we see the moral turpitude of sin; and are impressed with a deep sense of the divine goodness in our redemption †.

On this subject you require frequent admonition. "As oft as ye eat this bread, and "drink this cup, ye shew forth the Lord's "death till he come ‡." The word *oft* clearly

* Eph. iv. 1—3. † Matth. xxvi. 17—19. Luke xxii. 14—16. Matth. xxvi. 26—29. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23—25. x. 16, 17. John vi. 51. 53, 54.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

implies

implies frequency; a constant habit of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, whenever you have an opportunity. The participation of this ordinance has been the uniform, uninterrupted practice of Christians, of all ranks, from the Apostolic age down to the present day; and this custom will no doubt continue till the end of time. For it has a tendency to produce sentiments of contrition for past offences; piety to God; gratitude to our Redeemer; and charity and forgiveness towards all men *. Of course, it is an important means of improvement, and a grateful acknowledgment to God for all his mercies, but especially for effecting the salvation of the world by the death of his Son. It is a public avowal before our Maker, to our own consciences, and in the sight of man, that we believe that "Jesus Christ is the Mes-"siah, who was to come into the world †."—You are bound by duty, by gratitude, and by self-interest, to commemorate our Lord's death; and I hope that these powerful considerations will excite you to attend to this subject with unprejudiced minds; will guard you, for the future, against gross misconceptions of the nature

* Matth. v. 23, 24. † John xi. 27.

and design of this divine institution, and against an habitual neglect of so clear, and so positive an injunction of our religion; and, in short, will induce you, in the spirit of piety, and of benevolence, to partake of this sacrament, whenever it is administered. "I beseech you, "therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, "holy, acceptable to God, which is your rea-"sonable service *."

To excite devout and virtuous sentiments, let it be observed that, in all our approaches to the throne of God, we are now taught, that it is the temper and disposition of the mind, and not our external circumstances, which he regards †; and that true religion consists, not in sacrifices, which were, in their own nature, inefficacious to wash away the stains of moral guilt ‡, but in a pure and pious heart §; or, to use the language of the prophet, in "doing justly, loving "mercy, and walking humbly with our God ‖." "The High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth "eternity, dwelleth also with him that is of an

* Rom. xii. 1.
† John iv. 24. James i. 27. Pſalm xxvi. 6.
‡ Heb. x. 1—4. ix. 9. Isa. i. 11—17.
§ Pſal. xxiv. 3—5. Hos. vi. 6. Mark xii. 33.
‖ Micah vi. 8.

"humble

"humble and contrite spirit *." "The prayer "of the upright is his delight †." Through the merits and intercession of the Messiah, it "cometh before him as incense; and the lift-"ing up of the hands, as the evening sacri-"fice ‡."

Here it deserves our particular notice, that in these words there is an obvious allusion to the daily sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses. Indeed, unless we have some knowledge of the instituted means of "drawing near to God," under the Jewish dispensation, and of the various victims, festivals, rites, and ceremonies, which it enjoined, it is impossible to see the beauty, or even to understand the meaning, of many important passages in the Bible: and particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where a comparison is drawn between the Law and the Gospel; and in other parts of the New Testament, where the "spiritual sacrifices" of adoration, prayer, and praise, are required, as "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ §." My further intention therefore, at present, is, to shew you the design of sacrifices in general; and then, briefly to point out to you the efficacy

* Isa. lvii. 15. † Prov. xv. 8. ‡ Pſal. cxli. 2.
§ 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 16.

of

of our Lord's death for the expiation of sin, and the redemption of the world.

We find that sacrifices have been offered in divine worship from the earliest times *, and have constituted part of the religious observances of almost all nations, however remote and unconnected with each other. But they seem not to have been rightly understood among the Heathens †. On the contrary, it plainly appears

* Gen. iv. 4. compared with Heb. xi. 4. Gen. xxviii, 20—22.

† The classical scholar needs not be informed, that, among the Pagans, sacrifices were not offered to God, to that unoriginated, eternal, invisible, immutable, and infinitely perfect Being, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, of whom they had no distinct conception. Nor did they worship that apostate angel, who is termed in Scripture, *the devil, the adversary, the evil one, the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world.* According to the maxims of their theology, their devotions were addressed to *d mons*; that is, to the ghosts or spirits of men deceased, whether good or bad; to beings whom, in consequence of their useful inventions or great achievements, ignorance and superstition had deified after their death, but who were far subordinate to the supreme Object of adoration. This illustrates a noted passage of the apostle Paul, who affirms, 1 Cor. x. 20. that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they "sacrifice to *demons*," δαιμονιοις, to tutelary deities, "and not to "God." Hence that worship which was originally addressed, and is only due to the Supreme Being, was gradually transferred to the luminaries of heaven, and ultimately to the symbolical figures and hieroglyphic representations of heathen divinities,

pears from history, that they perverted the minds of the people, and turned them from purity of heart, and sublimity of devotion, to the external and ceremonious part of worship; substituting the form for the substance of religion; giving degrading ideas of the Deity, and producing a corresponding corruption of manners.

divinities, which became the objects of popular adoration, and proved an inexhaustible fund of mythological fictions. Deut. iv. 15—19. 23, 24. Rom. i. 22, 23. Deut. xxxii. 17. Hence also, as those objects of veneration multiplied, has arisen the vast and complicated system of mythology, which took place among the Greeks and Romans in Europe, and is still prevalent among the Indians in Asia. Homer, who flourished near a thousand years before the Christian æra, followed the Pagan theology, and has given, in the rustic simplicity of the times, a most curious description of antient sacrifices and lustrations in the first book of the Iliad, l. 440—474 of the original; of incense and prayer, in the ninth book, l. 492—508; and particularly of libation and sacrifice, towards the conclusion of the third book of the Odyssey.

But it is one of the great blessings derived from true religion, that it represents God as the Father of all mankind, and rejects such wild tenets and absurd rites as would be deemed a disgrace to enlightened reason. It leads men to acknowledge and reverence one Supreme Being, as the sole Object of devotion, and enables them to form just ideas of the divine nature and perfections. And, what deserves our serious attention, it sets before us a standard of true excellence, which we should endeavour to resemble; a system of morals, founded on the purest principles, which we are commanded to practise, Matth. v. 48. Eph. v. 1. Matth. vii. 12. James iii. 17.

Among

Among the Jews, however, they were better understood, being offered to the true God, and explained by their Prophets and Teachers. They seem originally to have been either appointed, or permitted by Providence, partly as an act of thanksgiving and acknowledgment from man, that all the good things he enjoyed were the gifts of his Creator: but principally to point out and prefigure that great atonement, which Christ was afterwards to make for the sins of mankind. In an illiterate age, and among the Jews, a people prone to idolatry, and accustomed to a worship of great and splendid ceremonies, sacrifices were doubtless intended to inspire men with sentiments of gratitude and reverence for the Maker of heaven and earth; and to promote sanctity of heart and life *. They consisted of three kinds, eucharistical, propitiatory, and expiatory: it may be useful to explain them to you. *Eucharistical* sacrifices were offered to God in the fervour of devotion, and were designed to express gratitude and praise, for benefits already received. Thus, when Noah quitted the ark, in which he and his family were saved from the deluge, "he built an altar unto the Lord; and,

* Exod. xii. 5. Levit. i. 3.

"taking

"taking of every clean beast, and of every "clean fowl, he offered burnt-offerings on the "altar." And, as those oblations were offered with a cheerful and grateful mind, we are told that God was pleased with this proof of his gratitude and piety *.—In the same manner, *propitiatory* sacrifices were designed, either to implore the continuance of the divine blessing, or to avert the divine wrath. We have a striking instance of this sort, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, when, with peculiar solemnity, "the king and all the people offered sacrifices "before the Lord," with a view of invoking his favour, and of impressing their minds with sentiments of gratitude, love, and devotion, to the supreme Object of all worship †.

And, in the method of making atonement for sin, according to the law of Moses, we see the nature and design of *expiatory* sacrifices ‡. With the deepest contrition did the Hebrew worshipper here acknowledge his imperfections and guilt, deprecate God's wrath, and confess that he deserved the death, which was to be inflicted on the victim. Expiatory sacrifices were by far the

* Gen. viii. 20, 21. † 1 Kings viii. 62.
‡ Lev. xvi. 20—22. 30—34.

most

most frequent. They consisted of the offerings of animals, which, by the appointment of Heaven, were acceptable for appeasing the wrath of God, and for obtaining his pardon and mercy, when accompanied with penitence, and with faith in the future Sacrifice of the Messiah, to which all the sacrifices from the fall bore a reference *. Hence the Passover, the most distinguished of the Jewish festivals, and at first instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage †, was designed also by Providence to be typical of the death of Christ ‡; and to shew that, "without shedding of blood, there was to be no remission of sins §." On the great day of atonement, this solemn festival was to be celebrated annually among the Jews, until the time of our Lord's crucifixion; when, by the Sacrifice of himself once offered, for the expiation of human guilt, sacrifices, having accomplished their end, were for ever abolished ‖.—From this explanation of the nature of sacrifices in general, we are led to consider the efficacy of our Lord's death,

* Heb. ix. 11—15.
† Exod. xii. 26, 27. 29.
‡ 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.
§ Heb. ix. 22.
‖ Heb. ix. 26; x. 10. 12. 14.

and

and the inestimable love of God in our redemption. The transition to this subject is indeed extremely easy and apposite. But, having dwelt so long in shewing you the design of sacrifices, there is less time, and indeed less necessity, to enlarge on the efficacy of Christ's death for the expiation of guilt.

We know from Scripture, that the sacrifices, instituted in the Jewish church, were principally intended to prepare the world for the reception of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; to prefigure the death of Christ; and to shew the efficacy of that great Sacrifice, in procuring the redemption of mankind. Hence, our Saviour is frequently called "the Lamb of God*;" "the Lamb slain," in effect, "from the foun-"dation of the world†." "Ye were not re-"deemed," says St. Peter, "with corruptible "things——but with the precious blood of "Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish, and "without spot——that your faith and hope "might be in God‡."

The redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, is that grand and extensive plan of Providence,

* John i. 29. Rev. v. 6. 9. 12.
† Rev. xiii. 8. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 18—21.

which

which runs through the whole Bible. This fundamental truth, both of the Jewish and of the Christian dispensations, is of the utmost importance to fallen man; and therefore there is no doctrine of Scripture, which has been revealed to us with greater clearness, or confirmed by stronger evidence. Even in the patriarchal age, holy men believed in a Messiah, and "rejoiced "to see his day" afar off*.—Of this sacred doctrine, which the "light" of Nature had imperfectly suggested, we have many obvious traces and significant allusions in the Old Testament †; and it is most clearly revealed by Christ and his Apostles in the New ‡; where it is constantly inculcated, that "there is one Mediator between "God and man §," by whose death and inter-

* John viii. 56.

† Gen. iii. 15; xxii. 18; and xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15. Psal. lxxii. 17—19. Isa. xlii. 6, 7; xlix. 6; liii. 4—6; and lxi. 1—3. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Dan. vii. 3, 14; and ix. 24—27. Hag. ii. 7. 9. Zech. xiii. 1. &c. &c. Compare Gen. xxii. 2, with Heb. xi. 17—19.

‡ Matth. xx. 28. John xiv. 6. Acts iv. 12; Rom. iii. 24—26. Eph. i. 7; and v. 2. Col. i. 13, 14. Heb. vii. 25; and ix. 28; 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 John ii. 1, 2; and iii. 5. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Tit. ii. 14. &c. &c.

§ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

cession

cession, our sincere, though imperfect services will be accepted.

"Through him, therefore, let us offer the sa-
"crifice of praise to God*;" ever remembering, that God requires the religion of the heart, and that the best sacrifice, which we can offer to our Maker, is a pious and virtuous life. Let us ever bless him for the advantages, which we derive from the light of revelation, and shew our gratitude by acting according to the sublime doctrines of Christianity. And, in a word, let our minds and conduct be always influenced by the principles of our holy religion, and the hope of eternal life†.

* Heb. xiii. 15. † Tit. i. 2.

SERMON V.

2 PETER, i. 21.

Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: But holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

OF the authenticity of Christianity we have ample proofs from prophecy, from miracles, and from its purity and intrinsic excellence. In times, like these, it may be of great use to consider the general nature and design of prophecy: it is a mode of evidence well calculated to give the firmest support to the Christian faith. To foretel future events is the peculiar characteristic of Divinity: such perfection of knowledge is not in man; it belongs only to God.

It is admitted that miracles lose much of their force, as they recede from the period in which they were performed. On the contrary, prophecy, though at first involved in considerable obscurity, is a kind of evidence, which increases through every age; and receives additional confirmation, as its mysteries are unravelled by the hand of time.

There are three subjects of prophecy, which especially merit our attentive consideration, and will tend to confirm the truth of Christianity: Those that relate to the Messiah, and the dispensation he was to introduce; those that relate to the delusions of popery, and the progress of infidelity; and those that refer to the Jews.

I. Let us consider some of the predictions, which relate to the Messiah, and his religion. But, let it be previously observed, that man has not persevered in his primitive innocence. This, indeed, requires no proof. Alas! the ruins of the fall, and the consequent corruption of human nature, are too perceptible both in our hearts, and in our lives. For the accounts which Scripture gives us of human depravity are founded on fact, and confirmed by experience.

rience. "All have sinned, and come short of "the glory of God *." Are we then to despair? No: Blessed be God, this melancholy doctrine of our depravity †, so humiliating to the natural pride of the human heart, leads to the most transcendent display of the divine benignity ‡.

In the Old Testament, our gracious Creator was pleased to give intimations of the future redemption of mankind, immediately after the fall. In the Book of Genesis, the Messiah is described as "the seed of the woman," who should ultimately "bruise the serpent's head §."

After a few ages, this promise was further explained and enlarged: The "seed of the wo-"man" was to be of the posterity of Abraham ‖; of the *tribe* of Judah ¶; and of the *family* of David **. The benefits, however, of this re-

* Rom. iii. 23.

† 1 John i. 8. 10. Gen. vi. 5. 12. Psal. xiv. 2, 3. Rom. v. 12—14. Job xv. 14—16. Psal. li. 5. Eccles. vii. 20. 29. Rom. iii. 9—20: and vii. 14—24. James i. 13—15. 1 John v. 19. Mark vii. 14—23. Jer. xvii. 9. Eph. ii. 1—3. Gal. v. 17.

‡ John iii. 16, 17.

§ Gen. iii. 15.

‖ Gen. xvii. 7. 19.

¶ Gen. xlix. 10.

** 1 Chron. xvii. 11—14. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

demption were not confined to one family, tribe, or nation; but were to extend to all mankind *.

The scheme of redemption, which was thus obscurely intimated to our first parents, and afterwards a little more distinctly to the patriarchs, was still more clearly, and fully, opened by the Mosaic dispensation, by the types, the ceremonies, and particularly the sacrifices of the Jewish church; and, lastly, by the various and remarkable predictions of the Prophets; all leading to the gracious truths of the Gospel, and all tending to prepare mankind for its full reception.

It would be a pleasing, and certainly not an unprofitable employment, to trace the various intimations, typical events, and remarkable predictions, from the first promise made after the fall, till the ever-memorable day, when our Saviour accomplished our redemption, and pronounced, "It is finished †." It might be observed, for instance, that when Abraham was ordered to sacrifice his only son Isaac ‡, it was intended to prefigure the future Sacrifice of the

* Gen. xxii. 18. † John xix. 30.

‡ Gen. xxii. 1—19, compared with John viii. 56, and Heb. xi. 17—19.

Messiah:

Messiah: That the Paschal lamb * was typical of the death of Christ: That the sin-offering † was predictive of him who, "though he knew "no sin, became a sin-offering for us ‡:" And, that the scape-goat § is a lively figure of him, "who hath borne our griefs, and carried our "sorrows ‖." But I shall only mention some of the most striking and important predictions; such as are most likely to carry general conviction.

Now you will find that the Messiah is represented by such peculiar characteristics as cannot be mistaken. Of his miraculous conception and nativity, we have as clear and circumstantial an account as is necessary. As the period drew nigh, the *time* ¶, the *place* **, as well as the *manner* of his birth, were expressly mentioned by the Prophets. It was foretold, that he should be born of a pure virgin, and be called Immanuel ††; that he should be of eminent piety and goodness ‡‡, and wonderfully compassionate and condescending §§. It was

* Exod. xii. 26, 27, compared with 1 Cor. v. 7.
† Levit. iv. 3. 13, 14. 22, 23. 27—29.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. § Levit. xvi. 20—22.
‖ Isa. liii. 4. 6, compared with 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25.
¶ Dan. ix. 24. ** Micah v. 2.
†† Isa. vii. 14. ‡‡ Isa. xi. 5. §§ Isa. xl. 11; xlii. 3.

foretold, that he should publish peace and salvation *; that he should preach good tidings to the poor and illiterate; that he should bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison unto them that are bound †. It was predicted, that he should perform many miracles: that he should make the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak ‡. The tendency of his religion was to promote peace and happiness among mankind. Accordingly, the most discordant objects of nature are emblematically represented in a state of harmony; and, in the prophetic style, the most ferocious animals are actually tamed §.

But, though his mission was of the most benevolent nature, though the Saviour of the world, and "the Prince of peace ||," yet he was to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with "grief ¶." It was foretold, that he should be betrayed by one of his intimate friends **; that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver ††; that he should be insulted, spit on, and

* Isa. lii. 7.
‡ Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.
|| Isa ix. 6.
** Isa. xli. 9.
† Isa. lxi. 1.
§ Isa. ii. 4; xi. 6—9.
¶ Isa. liii. 3.
†† Zech. xi. 12.

scourged;

scourged*; that his hands, and his feet, should be pierced, but that his bones should not be broken†; that his garments should be parted, and lots cast for them‡; that gall and vinegar should be given to him to drink§; that he should be numbered among transgressors, make his grave with the wicked, and that he should be buried in a rich man's tomb‖. The very *cause* of all his sufferings is expressly stated: He was to suffer death, not for his own sins, but for the sins of mankind¶. At a certain period, specified by the appointment of Heaven, he was "to finish transgression, to make an end of "sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and "to bring in everlasting righteousness**." But, though thus depressed for a season, it was also predicted, that he should rise again, without seeing corruption††; that he should see his seed, prolong his days‡‡, and have an everlasting dominion§§.

* Isa. l. 6. Micah v. 1. Psal. xxii. 7.
† Psal. xxii. 16. Exod. xii. 46. Num. ix. 12. Zech. xii. 10.
‡ Psal. xxii. 18. § Psal. lxix. 21. ‖ Isa. liii. 12. 9.
¶ Dan. ix. 26. Isa. liii. 5. ** Dan. ix. 24.
†† Psal. xvi. 10. Jonah i. 17. Hosea vi. 2. Job. xix. 25, 26.
‡‡ Isa. liii. 10. §§ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Accordingly,

Accordingly, he is described in terms which must strike us with the most profound awe and reverence; he is even represented as a Being of the highest dignity and authority, infinitely superior to men or angels *. And it ought not to be omitted, that, with a view to remove the prejudices of the Jews, and to shew them that the predictions concerning the Messiah were not to be considered in a literal and temporal sense, they are expressly told that their expected King, after publishing the most perfect revelation of the Divine will, was "to be cut "off †;" and their everlasting Priest "to make "his soul an offering for sin ‡."

These, then, are some of the remarkable prophecies concerning the birth, character, and mission, the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, many hundred years before his assumption of human nature. It is readily admitted that some of these predictions were expressed in an ambiguous and obscure manner; and this obscurity was, no doubt, increased by

* Isa. ix. 6, 7; xl. 9. and Psal. lxxii; xlv. 6, 7. compared with Heb. i. 7—9; Psal. cii. 25—27. with Heb. i. 10—12; Psal. cx. 1. with Matth. xxii. 41—46. &c.

† Dan. ix. 26. ‡ Isa. liii. 10.

the

the metaphorical or symbolical language of prophecy. But, as the period drew nearer, when he was to make his appearance on earth, they became much clearer. This method, by which the Supreme Being gradually revealed his merciful designs towards man, is admirably expressed by Solomon, when he says, that "the path "of the just is as the shining light, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect "day *." For, though a single prophecy may be obscure; yet, if the whole be collected together, they give a strong and irresistible light. —Prophecy, we have seen, commenced from the fall of man, is gradually unfolding itself, and will not be fully accomplished till the consummation of all things. It consists of an immense chain of interesting events, which the combined wisdom of man could not have discovered, and can only be traced to the foreknowledge of God. Its grand and ultimate object, however, is to throw light on the history of the Messiah, and on the merciful dispensation, and spiritual kingdom, which he was to establish.

* Prov. iv. 18.

Now,

Now, with minds thus prepared, open the New Testament; and you will readily "find "him, of whom Moses in the law, and the "prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the" reputed "son of Joseph *." Compare these remarkable predictions in the Old Testament with his history in the New †, and you will see that they are all punctually fulfilled in him. What our Saviour said, during the affecting interview which he had, after his resurrection, with two of his disciples in the way to Emmaus, sets this matter in the strongest light; when, "beginning with Moses, and" proceeding through "all the Prophets, he explained to them "the passages relating to himself ‡."

To these proofs of our religion, it deserves here to be added, that among the remarkable predictions of our Lord, which have been accomplished, he foretold the treachery of Judas §;

* John i. 45.

† Matth. i. 18—25. Luke i. 26—38. Gal. iv. 4. Luke iv. 18—21. Matth. xi. 2—6; ii. 1—6. John vii. 42. Matth. viii. 16, 17; xxvi. 14—16. 67; xxvii. 3—10. 27—35. 57—60. Mark xv. 27, 28. Matth. xxviii. 5. Acts ii. 22—36.

‡ Luke xxiv. 27. Acts iii. 18; xxvi. 22, 23; xxviii. 23.

§ John xiii. 18—26. Matth. xxvi. 20—25. 45—49.

the

the momentary apostacy of Peter *; and the striking circumstances of his own death and resurrection †. He also foretold the extensive progress of his religion among the Gentiles ‡; the total and signal destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans §; the very period when this awful and improbable event should take place ‖; and the sad calamities, which should soon befal the whole Jewish nation ¶.

II. Having dwelt thus long on the predictions concerning the Messiah, the limits of my plan necessarily compel me to be less circumstantial in my account of the prophecies, which relate to the corruptions of popery, the progress of infidelity, and the history of the Jews.

We live in an age, in which many astonishing events occur, which must occupy the attention of every reflecting mind. Now, among the

* Matth. xxvi. 31—35. Luke xxii. 31, 32. Matth. xxvi. 69—75.

† John ii. 18—22; iii. 14, 15. Matth. xvi. 21. Mark ix. 9, 10. Matth. xii. 38—40; xx. 17—19. 28; xxvi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 1—7.

‡ Matth. xiii. 31—33. John x. 16. Matth. xxiv. 14. Mark xvi. 14—18.

§ Luke xix. 41—44. Matth. xxiii. 37—39. Luke xxi. 20—24. 32.

¶ Matth. xxiv. 1, 2. 7, 8. 15—22. 28. Luke xxiii. 28—31.

stupendous

stupendous predictions of Scripture, the commencement, the duration, and the declension of the papal power, are minutely described, and are too remarkable to be overlooked.

1. Let the intelligent reader first consider the description given by the prophet Daniel of its authority, its insolence *, and its duration †.

2. Let him next consider what St. Paul has foretold concerning this apostacy, under the emblem of *the man of sin* ‡. Let him also observe, what the same Apostle has asserted, in another place, of the nature of this defection from the truth. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that, in the latter days, some will "depart," or apostatize, "from the Christian "faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and to "doctrines concerning dæmons;" that is, concerning the worship of angels, and of glorified saints. This will introduce corrupt tenets in religion, "speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding" the clergy and monastic orders "to marry, and "commanding to abstain from" certain "meats §." Here the spiritual authority which papacy as-

* Dan. vii. 25—27; xi. 36—39.

† Dan. xii. 7. compared with Revel. xi. 2, 3. and Rev. xii. 6. 14. Twelve hundred and sixty days, in the prophetic style, denote as many *years*.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 1—10. § 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 8.

sumed,

sumed, is further delineated, and a distinguishing part of its character admirably described.

3. Let him examine what had been shewn to St. John concerning this hostile power, and the particular spot, where it was to arise, and to be most prevalent. "I saw," says he, "a beast, "with seven heads and ten horns, and upon his "horns, ten crowns, and upon his heads, the "name of blasphemy *." The domination of Papal Rome is here represented under the symbolical vision of a horrible "beast having seven "heads," alluding to the seven hills on which Rome is built, and "ten horns," referring to the ten independent sovereignties, into which the Roman empire was divided by the irruption of the Goths, and other barbarous nations of the North †.

Again, in the 17th chapter of the Revelations, the Apostle mentions the persecution and decline of the same spirit more fully, under the emblematical form of an impious "wo-"man," by whom "the inhabitants of the "earth have been intoxicated with the wine of "her fornication ‡; which, in the figurative language of Scripture, denotes ceremonial and

* Rev. xiii. 1. 6.
† Dan. vii. 24.
‡ Rev. xvii. 2.

moral

moral impurity.—He then proceeds to describe her, as decorated with the richest and most splendid vestments, and as corrupting the nations with gross idolatry, and with the most detestable practices. "I saw her sitting upon a "scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blas- "phemy, having seven heads and ten horns. "She was arrayed in purple, and scarlet, and "decked with gold, and precious stones, and "pearls; having a golden cup in her hand, "filled with the abominations and pollution of "her fornication. On her forehead was in- "scribed, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mo- "ther of harlots, and of the abominations of the "earth.* And she was drunk with the blood of "saints and martyrs *."

After this emblematical description, which was common among Eastern nations, I need only add the explanation given by the sacred writer: "for the seven heads are seven moun- "tains on which the woman sitteth; and the "woman represents that great city, which "reigneth over the kings of the earth †."

Let any man read the history of Christianity, during the bloody persecutions from Nero to

* Rev. xvii. 3—6. † Rev. xvii. 9. 12. 18.

Con-

Constantine, and consider the immense number that fell victims to the intolerant spirit of popery in following ages; and he will see that this prophecy has been indisputably completed, and that every engine of oppression and torture has been raised against the Saints of the Most High.

The Apostle then enters into a farther explanation in the next chapter, to which I must refer the reader; and shall only observe that, in the beginning of it *, he uses the strongest language to describe the idolatry and apostacy of this antichristian power; and then subjoins a solemn admonition that we become not accessary to such enormous guilt †.

Now, you can hardly have considered all that has been revealed to us on this interesting subject with attention, and with an unbiassed mind, and not have applied these strong epithets to the monstrous errors and usurpations of the church of Rome. Indeed, the rise, progress, and extinction, of the papal domination are so clearly described, at a period too when no such power existed, are so peculiarly marked,

* Rev. xviii. 2, 3. † Rev. xviii. 4, 5.

and are so far fulfilled, that we seem now to be in no danger of mistake in our application.

As this apostacy in religion gradually commenced, it is probable that it will be gradually destroyed. And it appears, that this defection from the true faith and worship of God was not to be a total renunciation of Christianity, but the introduction of erroneous doctrines, pious frauds, indulgences, and absolutions, purgatory, transubstantiation, fictitious miracles, idolatrous worship, pompous ceremonies, superstitious mortifications, monastic institutions, the celibacy of the clergy, and a spirit of bigotry and persecution. Thus, as it was predicted, the beauty of the Christian worship was to be dreadfully tarnished, for a time, by the gross errors and usurpations of ignorant, wicked, and ambitious men.

But, while we contemplate this papal tyranny and these melancholy corruptions, which have so much impeded the progress of genuine Christianity, it affords the greatest consolation to every religious mind, and is an illustrious attestation of the truth of Scripture, to find, from the same unerring authority, that the power and influence of this antichristian spirit are gradually diminishing, as the minds of men become more enlightened,

lightened, and will be ultimately annihilated, when the Gospel, in its native purity, will prevail; and when both Jews and Gentiles will be converted to the Christian faith *.

4. It ought not to be omitted, that *infidelity* has lately assumed the most formidable aspect, has introduced great depravity of manners, and has proved most hostile to the cause of Christianity. By its baneful influence, and most seductive arts, it has a tendency to debase human nature, to subvert religion and civil government, and, to the extent it has been carried, utterly to destroy the hopes of a future state †. Let the serious enquirer after truth peruse what St. Peter and St. Jude ‡ have predicted concerning its dire effects: it will throw considerable light on this portion of Scripture, when it is compared with the present awful state of the world.

But, amidst every temptation which may assail you, let me earnestly beseech you to pre-

* Rev. xvii. 14. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 27. Mal. i. 11. Habak. ii. 14.

† The French inscription on some of their Cemeteries was, "*Death is eternal sleep.*" For the honour of human nature, it is to be hoped, that it is now obliterated.

‡ 2 Pet. iid and iiid chapters; and Jude 4. 8. 16—19. See also 1 John ii. 18, 19. 22; iv. 3. 2 Thess. ii. 1—10.

serve in your minds purity of faith and of morals, a love for virtue and peace, and for those other Christian principles which promote the dearest interests of man, and serve as an antidote against the spreading poison of atheism and infidelity. With this view I must carefully guard you against all the snares that have been, and are still, employed to vilify the Scriptures, to seduce you from the Christian faith, and to loosen the ties of good order and morality. Whilst some men may promise you "liberty "from the restraint of all laws," human and divine, I am inclined to think (as it is recorded in the words of an Apostle), that "they themselves are the slaves of corruption *;" and are fulfilling the stupendous plans of Providence, which remain still to be executed.——I now proceed to observe,

III. That, amidst the various predictions in the Old and New Testament, there are none, perhaps, which call for, and merit a more serious and devout attention, than those that relate to the Jews—to their dispersion, and the denunciations of punishment to be in-

* 2 Pet. ii. 19. John viii. 34. Rom. vi. 16. 19—21.

flicted

flicted on them *; to their final restoration to Palestine, the Holy-Land †, the distinguished spot where the Son of God lived and died; and to their conversion to Christianity ‡. Whoever will carefully examine the prophecies relative to the Jews, as recorded, at different times, by the sacred writers, and compare them with their political constitution, and civil history —still a distinct and separate people—still in a state of depression and infidelity—and still adhering to their religious institutions, their laws and ceremonies, their language, their customs, and their manners; for many ages dispersed over the whole face of the earth; without any form of civil polity, without any permanent establishment, and their city, Jerusalem, with the holy temple, totally and signally destroyed §: whoever, I say, will carefully and candidly compare the prophetic declarations, so clear, so

* Jer. xxiv. 9. Deut. iv. 26, 27; xxviii. 15. 28, 29. 33. 37. 49—53. 64—66. Levit. xxvi. 18. 20. 32, 33. Deut. xxix. 22—25.

† Zech. ii. 10—13; viii. 4—8. Ezek. xx. 33—44; xxxiv. 11—16. 28, 29; xi. 16—20; xxxvi. 24—36; xxxvii. 1—14. 21—28; xxxviii. 14—23; and xxxix. 1—7. 23—29. Jer. xxiii. 3, 4. 7, 8; and xxxi. 1—14. 31—40. Amos ix. 11—15.

‡ Rom. xi. 15. 25, 26. 2 Cor. iii. 14—16.

§ Hos. iii. 4. Micah iii. 12. Matth. xxii. 7; and xxiv. 1, 2.

express, and so exactly verified by past events, must be struck with reverence and amazement; must have an incontrovertible proof of God's moral government of the world, and of the authenticity of Christianity, to which the Jews are to be converted; and must acknowledge, that nothing ever occurred in the history of mankind, that can be compared to the wonderful events which have happened to that peculiar people, who were once the favourites of Heaven, and are still reserved to manifest the councils, the justice, and the mercy, of the Most High.

I might also take occasion to remark, that the Arabs, as well as the Jews, are a striking and living evidence of the veracity of the Old Testament. How astonishingly have the predictions, recorded in the patriarchal history, concerning Ishmael, been verified in his posterity, the wild and rapacious Arabs! "He "will be a wild man; his hand will be against "every man, and every man's hand against "him *." Thus we see that the lapse of many ages, and the revolutions of human events, have only tended to give the fullest confirmation to the truth of Scripture.

* Gen. xvi. 12. See also Gen. xxi. 18. 20, 21.

Besides

Besides these awful predictions, there are many others, described with accuracy, which deserve our attention. But I shall only add at present, on the subject of prophecy, what is an animating consideration to a benevolent mind, that the intercourse already opened, and still increasing, between the different nations of the earth, and the consequent diffusion of knowledge, are paving the way for the reception of Christianity *, and the civilization of mankind; when "all the kingdoms of this world shall "become the kingdoms of Christ †;" and "all "the kindreds of the nations shall worship be-"fore him ‡."

On the wonderful scheme of prophecy, thus far elucidated, I shall only make two short, but important observations, which the subject has naturally suggested.

In the first place, we have the greatest reason to thank God for the striking evidence for the truth of Christianity, derived from prophecy. The predictions, which may be traced through the Old and New Testament, are so wonderfully

* Mal. i. 11. Isa. ii. 1—5. Psal. ii. 8. Matth. xiii. 31,32.
† Rev. xi. 15. Mark iv. 26—32.
‡ Psal. xxii. 27.

and so minutely fulfilled, that, when joined to the other evidences of religion, and carefully considered, they powerfully enforce a profound veneration of God, a devout acknowledgment of his over-ruling Providence, and a sacred dread of his displeasure. They must convince every unprejudiced mind, that they are not of human contrivance; that they were dictated to holy men, for wise purposes, by the unerring Spirit of God; and that they are admirably calculated to enlighten human ignorance, and to confirm our faith in the divine origin of Christianity *.

In the second place, let us remember, that this vast scheme for the salvation of mankind, carried on through so many ages, was designed to convince us of the truth of God's moral government; to afford us the highest reason to confide in his faithfulness, for the accomplishment of all his other promises, which remain yet unfulfilled †; and to induce us to attend to the important duties which we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves.—With such luminous and incontrovertible evidences for the authenticity of Scripture, we are not left at li-

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. 1 Pet. i. 11.
† Rom. xv. 4. 13.

berty

berty to reject this revelation of the divine will, as our fancies may suggest to us *. Be assured, that we are accountable to our Maker for the truths he has made known to us, and are to be judged by the laws of Christianity, whether we obey them or not †. This most awful consideration cannot be too frequently presented to our view, or too strongly impressed on our minds. The Gospel was graciously intended to be the discriminating principle to regulate our thoughts, our words, and our actions. Let us, therefore, follow its sacred influence, till it conduct us, as it was designed, through the various trials and difficulties of this precarious state, to the happier regions of light and immortality ‡.

* Heb. ii. 3. † John xii. 48.
‡ 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

MATTH. vii. 12.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

HAVING considered some of the principal doctrines of Christianity, let us next consider some of the practical duties which it enjoins; and which cannot fail to carry irresistible conviction to an unprejudiced mind. And first: if we examine the moral precepts of the Gospel, we shall find, that they contain a system of the most pure, the most sublime, and the most perfect morality, which can be conceived. Indeed, no precept can be found in the New Testament,

Testament, that is not adapted to our progressive improvement and final happiness, and conducive to the most important interests of society. They all breathe that heavenly spirit of universal benevolence, by which the Christian temper may be distinguished. They are perfectly consonant to the soundest dictates of the understanding, and the clearest intimations of conscience; and, were we all regulated in our conduct, as we ought to be, by the laws of Christianity, did we all "love our neighbours "as ourselves *," many of the troubles of life would be removed; and this world would become a comfortable passage to a better. In confirmation of these remarks, we are to observe, that Christianity teaches us, that we are all the offspring of the same Heavenly Parent, and therefore commands us, "*as we have opportu-* "*nity*, to do good unto all men †," whatever may be their religion, their rank, or their country.

Further: let us consider the beneficial tendency of our religion to promote the interest, the order, and the peace of society. "*Do to* "*others*," says the text, "*whatever you might*

* Matth. xxii. 39. † Gal. vi. 10.

"*reasonably*

"*reasonably expect them, in like circumstances,* "*to do to you* *." This is the sacred law which it gives you, to direct your daily conduct, in all your intercourse with your fellow-creatures. Now, this evangelical principle, deeply impressed on the mind, will prompt you, at all times, to alleviate the afflictions, and to promote the happiness, of mankind. It will guard the rich against tyranny and oppression, and the poor against turbulence and discontent. It stimulates men to virtuous industry, and warns them against that pride and insolence, that idleness and dishonesty †, those civil dissentions and intestine commotions, which are the source of so many crimes, and of so much misery ‡. It shews, that we ought not to do to others, what we should think unjust or unfair to be done to us.

In the next place, with a view to render mankind virtuous and happy, the Christian religion enjoins veracity in our words, honesty in our dealings, and adherence to our promises. It exhorts us, to put away "all bitterness, wrath, "anger, clamour, evil-speaking, and ma-

* Matth. vii. 12. Luke vi. 31.
† Prov. xi. 1; and xx. 10. ‡ Matth. xii. 25.

"lice;"

"lice*;" and, instead of these malignant passions, which disturb our peace, it recommends "mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, forbearance, brotherly affection, and "charity†." It is likewise designed to influence and direct our general conduct; it teaches that, even in the most common actions of our lives, "whether we eat or drink, or whatever "we do," we are to do all in such a manner as may tend "to the glory of God‡." It particularly impresses our hearts with the necessity of benignity, of true Christian love, that "bond "of perfection§," without which we are told, that all our endowments, whether of body or of mind, are, in the sight of God, of no value‖. It enjoins us to love all men, and to do good to all, without even excepting our enemies¶. And it shews us, what Christians should never forget, that diversities of opinion, in religious sentiments, or in modes of worship, should not be the cause of intolerance, persecution, or

* Eph. iv. 31. † Col. iii. 12—14.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. iii. 17. § Col. iii. 14.

‖ Matth. vi. 14, 15. See also St. Paul's incomparable description of benignity, 1 Cor. xiii.

¶ Matth. v. 43—48. Rom. xii. 19—26. Matth. xviii. 21—35.

alienation

alienation of affection*; and that, although we may not all join in the same religious service, yet we should all unite in mutual forbearance, and in the same Christian charity.

These great principles have had considerable influence on the laws and customs, the minds and manners, of those nations, who have received them; they have rendered them more mild and merciful, and have even mitigated the natural calamities of war. We may easily trace their blessed effects, in treating captives with humanity; in gradually abolishing slavery; in promoting civilization, good government†, and useful knowledge; and in establishing many excellent charities, for the instruction of the ignorant, and the relief of the indigent. If the time would admit, we might expatiate on these topics, with peculiar pleasure. But it may be only necessary to remark, that the principles of Christianity, by their mildness and humanity, have, in some measure, softened and corrected that ferocity of temper and degeneracy of morals, which are the effects of ignorance and irreligion; and have already diffused, among the

* Luke ix. 54—56. Rom. xiv. 4. Matth. xiii. 29, 30.
† 1 Pet. ii. 13—17. Mark xii. 13—17.

most

most enlightened and civilized nations, a benevolence of heart, a gentleness of manners, and a regard to the rights of humanity, totally unknown before the promulgation of the Gospel. Banish these Christian principles from the world, and the greatest misery and disorder would inevitably ensue; but, as they prevail, they advance the peace and comfort of society, and bring forward that happy period, which should be the subject of our daily prayers, when the "nations shall beat their swords into plow-shares, "and their spears into pruning-hooks*;" when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of "the Lord, as the waters cover the sea †."

And here it may not be improper to remark, that, to the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, may be attributed the institution and flourishing state of Friendly Societies, so honourable to the characters of the members, and by which their condition is so considerably improved. Now, it always affords me great satisfaction to observe their prudence, and their philanthropy, in thus appropriating a certain portion of their earnings to the comfort and relief of the sick, of the lame, and of the aged members of their socie-

* Isa. ii. 4. † Isa. xi. 9.

ty;

ty; and in making a proper provision, while they are young, and in health, to secure themselves and their families from the painful humiliation of a parish-maintenance *. And, I am persuaded that, while some are indolent †, improvident, and fraudulent, and thereby bring a disgrace on themselves, and on their relations, they all feel a peculiar pleasure in carrying their contributions to the fund of their society ‡; in affording relief to the honest, the unfortunate, and the helpless; and thereby in supporting an independence of spirit, and a benevolence of nature, which we should ever maintain. If Providence continue to bless them with health and employment, they will feel grateful to him, that they have not required any relief; and, if any of them should linger long on a bed of sickness; and be incapacitated by disease, or debilitated by age, it will be a great alleviation of his affliction to know, that he and his family will be properly taken care of by his friends and neighbours, without becoming a burden to the public; and that, when he dies,

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

† Prov. xxiv. 30—32; vi. 6—11; and xiv. 23.

‡ 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Acts xi. 29.

he will not only be buried decently at the expence of the Society, but a small sum will be given for the relief of his widow and orphans.—From the beneficial effects already produced by Friendly Societies *, it is much to be wished, that these useful institutions may be generally established, and that their good example, in this respect, may have an extensive influence among the lower ranks. For this purpose, and in order to confirm and augment the stability of such Societies, let them be reminded, as it cannot be done too frequently, of the importance and necessity of harmony, good humour, sobriety, and a strict observance of their Rules, at all their meetings; otherwise their Societies cannot flourish, nor can they expect the Divine blessing on their endeavours. Amidst that diversity of sentiment, which generally prevails in large societies, let them also be admonished, to preserve unity of affection; to cultivate gentle and obliging manners; and to adhere strictly to the grand philanthropic object of their institution †.—And let your own experience of dis-

* See the Author's Philanthropic Tracts.

† 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

tress

tress ever prompt you to feel for, and to sympathise with, the distresses of others.

As some of those who are now my hearers are employed in the care and management of cattle, we must not omit to remark, that they should always guard against any cruel treatment of them, and should recollect what Solomon says, that "a righteous man regardeth the life," and is not inattentive to the comfort "of his "beast *." Unnecessary severity, even to the brute-creation, is a token of a hard and unfeeling heart, and therefore it is highly proper to caution you against it.—Remember, then, that the great and benevolent Author of Nature, whose Providence extends over the immense range of creation, will certainly punish you for every act of wanton cruelty, inflicted on the least or meanest of his creatures.—This leads us to consider those duties, which arise from particular relations, and stations in life.

Now it deserves our most serious attention, that it is the duty of every Christian to apply himself to such useful occupations as are suitable to his rank. Religion, so far from encouraging habits of indolence, expressly enforces diligence,

* Prov. xii. 10.

and requires us to provide, by honest means, for ourselves and families *. Its obvious tendency is, to promote domestic affection, and public welfare. From a principle of piety, we are enjoined to perform all relative duties with vigilance and assiduity, according to our respective stations, and circumstances in life.

Among other precepts of our religion which merit our consideration, the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, and of masters and servants, are explained with great clearness and precision. The married state is to be observed with all fidelity and sanctity †; and, that it may be happy, we are taught, that the husband must treat his wife with affection and tenderness ‡, and the wife behave with submission and respect to her husband §.—Both parents and children are to do every thing in their power to render each other easy, virtuous, and happy.—Children are to honour their parents, to shew them every mark of gratitude and regard, to obey all their

* 2 Thess. iii. 10—12.

† Matth. xix. 3—9. Mark x. 12. 1 Cor. vii. 2, 3.

‡ Col. iii. 19. Eph. v. 28, 29. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Eph. v. 25. 33.

§ Eph. v. 22—24. Col. iii. 18. Tit. ii. 1—5. 1 Pet. iii. 1—6. Prov. xxxi. 10—19. 23—28.

lawful

lawful commands, and to assist them in distress *. And parents are to provide for their children †, to treat them with kindness and natural affection ‡, to give them a Christian education, and to train them up in early habits of piety, virtue, and industry §. Servants, or day-labourers, are enjoined fidelity, frugality, and obedience, not merely from worldly motives, but as being under the constant inspection of God, by whom their conscientious services will be rewarded. "Servants, be obedient to your "masters, doing service as to the Lord, and not "to men ‖." On the other hand, masters are required to behave with lenity and humanity to their servants; to shew a tender concern for their temporal and eternal interests; and are reminded, that "they also have a Master in "Heaven," to whom they are responsible ¶.

* Exod. xx. 12. Prov. xxiii. 22. Eph. vi. 1—3. Col. iii. 20.

† 2 Cor. xii. 14.

‡ Isa. xlix. 15. Col. iii. 21.

§ Eph. vi. 4. Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. xi. 18, 19; and vi. 6, 7. Prov. xxii. 6.

‖ Eph. vi. 5—8. Col. iii. 22—25. Tit. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18—20. Luke xii. 47, 48.

¶ Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1.

In like manner, men of every rank and condition have their respective duties distinctly enjoined; and should endeavour, as far as they are able, to fulfil the wise purposes of Providence in their creation. Those who are placed in the higher stations of life are bound, by the laws of Christianity, to revere God, to administer justice, to avoid oppression and dissoluteness of manners themselves, and to check them in others; to encourage industry and virtue, to instruct, civilize, and improve mankind, and, by condescension and beneficence, to diffuse general happiness *.

By the same principles, the inferior ranks of society are required to shew gratitude and respect for all the favours they receive from their superiors, to obey their lawful commands, to be frugal and industrious, to suppress the emotions of envy and discontent, of violence and fraud, and to discharge, with chearfulness and fidelity, the important functions of their humble station †.

* 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. Psal. lxxxii. 1—4, Jer. xxii. 3. Lev. xix. 15.

† Rom. xiii. 1—7. Prov. xxiv. 21. Tit. iii. 1, 2.

From

From hence we learn, that the Gospel tends to influence our conduct in every relation of life, and that, as Christians, and as members of society, we must cultivate a peaceable, a candid, an affectionate, and humane temper. This temper is, in fact, the grand pillar on which public order, domestic comfort, and internal tranquillity, all rest. And what highly concerns us, to rectify our principles of action, and to form this disposition of mind, should be the primary object of our attention, amidst the various transactions of life.

As many of you are placed in subordinate stations, and are in indigent circumstances, you are peculiarly exposed to theft, which is a most odious crime in society. I must, therefore, earnestly guard you against the most trifling act of dishonesty, however secret; for, you may be imperceptibly led, at last, to commit the most daring robbery, and to be exhibited as an awful spectacle of public justice.—Remember, then, that you are not to take away your neighbour's property, either by force or by fraud: for they who are guilty of pilfering and stealing are ranked with murderers*; and the most tre-

* Eph. iv. 28. Matth. xix. 16—19. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

mendous punishments are denounced against them. Remember also, that we are necessarily connected in society; no man, strictly speaking, is independent; each having a certain station to fulfil, and certain duties to perform. However obscure your rank may be, you are placed there by Providence for useful purposes; and every man's life is of importance to himself, to his family, to his country, and to mankind.

Hence we see, that the man, who is either guilty of fraud or dishonesty, injustice or oppression, unkindness or inhumanity, is violating some of the clearest and most important laws of Christianity. The duties which it enjoins are, indeed, a most striking and incontrovertible evidence of its authenticity. If Christianity be of Divine origin, you must all be sensible, that it will enforce good principles, will recommend a mutual interchange of good offices, and will prohibit every thing that is cruel and immoral. "The wisdom which is from above" is delineated with such peculiar qualities as cannot be mistaken. In its principle, "it is," says St. James, "pure and peaceable;" and, in its effects, "full of mercy and good fruits*."

* James iii. 17.

Christianity,

Christianity, then, contains nothing repugnant to the dictates of conscience, that "candle of "the Lord *," that mental "light," which God has given you to govern your practice, and to discriminate between moral good and evil.—Let me beseech you, therefore, seriously to consider, whether you possess that temper of mind, that piety towards God, and that integrity towards man, which the Gospel expressly requires. This is a momentous consideration to you all. For, be assured, that a neglect of these duties is incompatible with your Christian profession; that, if you are sincere in your religious principles, they will have a visible influence on your life and conduct; and that many evils may be avoided, if you follow the Apostle's exhortation, and "study to be quiet, and "mind your own business †."

* Prov. xx. 27.

† 1 Thess. iv. 11.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

PHILIPPIANS, ii. 5.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

BEFORE we proceed to consider the humble and benevolent disposition, which is here proposed for our imitation, it may not be improper to observe, although the remark be not immediately connected with our present subject, that there is something wonderfully striking and impressive in the manner of our Lord's teaching. We are told, "that the people were astonished "at his doctrine, for his word was with power *."

* Luke iv. 22. 32. Matth. vii. 28, 29. Mark xii. 37.

It

It was usual with him to raise moral and religious instruction from the incidents and objects, which offered themselves to his view. Accordingly, you may observe in his discourses, that he makes constant allusions to the season of the year, the occurrences of the time, and the occupations of those to whom he spoke *. From the birds of the air that were flying near him, and from the lilies of the field that were growing around him, he gave a beautiful illustration of God's universal Providence. "Behold the fowls of the air. "They neither sow nor reap, nor gather into "barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth "them. Are ye not much better than they? "And why are ye anxious about raiment? "Consider the lilies of the field. How do they "grow? They toil not: they spin not. Yet I "say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his "glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If, "therefore, God so clothe the grass, which to-"day is in the field, and to-morrow will be cast "into the oven; will he not much more clothe "you, O ye of little faith †."

* Matth. iv. 18—22. † Matth. vi. 26—30.

Observing

Observing how eager the several guests were to get the chief seats at the table, he gave them an important injunction against pride and vanity *. ——It was probably when he saw crowds of worshippers going up to Jerusalem, at one of the Jewish festivals, fatigued with a long journey, exhausted by oppressive burdens, or labouring under ceremonial rites and apprehensions of guilt, that he invited them, with gracious benignity, to become his disciples, and imbibe his doctrines; assuring them that he would impose no unnecessary hardships on them, and intimating that the principles of his religion are well calculated to give ease and comfort to the mind. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are "heavy burdened; and I will relieve you. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; "for I am meek, and lowly in heart: and ye "shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke "is easy, and my burden is light †."

Again: "Early in the morning," as he was teaching the people in the temple, he observed the sun just rising in its usual splendour: and from thence he represents himself as "the Sun "of righteousness," designed, by his heavenly

* Luke iv. 7—11.

† Matth. xi. 28—30.

instructions,

instructions, to illuminate every part of the earth. "I am the light of the world: he who follow-"eth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall "have the light of life *."

In the same manner, when he was about to confirm their faith by raising Lazarus from the dead; carrying their thoughts forward to that awful hour, when all would hear his mandate, and come forth, he uttered these animating words: "I am the resurrection and the life. "He that believeth in me, though he were "dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever be-"lieveth in me, shall never die †."——— Finding that the people came to him, not so much for the purpose of obtaining conviction from his miracles, as for the sake of having their hunger allayed, and of deriving some temporal advantage from him; he declares himself "the bread of life," prefigured by the manna, which the Israelites ate in the desert; and, in language highly metaphorical, calls their attention to spiritual nourishment and comfort from his doctrines, and to a participation in the blessings of the Gospel ‡.

* John viii. 2. 12. Mal. iv. 2. Matth. iv. 16. Luke i. 79.
† John xi. 25, 26. ‡ John vi. 25—58.

With

With a view that we may make a moral and religious use of the various appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, let us mention a few more instances of his manner of conveying instruction. The washing of the body was too apt an emblem of the purification of the heart to be omitted by him: especially in the warm climate of Judea; and among the Jews, by whom such ablutions were considered as a religious ceremony *.——The hills in the Holy-Land being frequently covered with vines, he might take occasion, as he passed through the vineyards, perhaps during the time of vintage, to mention the intimate union between himself and his disciples. "I am the "vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth "in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth "much fruit; for without me ye can do no-"thing. Herein is my Father glorified, that "ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my dis-"ciples †."

It was by such common, natural, and sublime images, taken from objects of sense, that he inculcated the most valuable and heavenly in-

* Luke xi. 37—41. Matth. xxiii. 25—28. John xiii. 1—17. Matth. xv. 10, 11. 15—20.

† John xv. 1—10. Luke xxii. 18. 20.

structions.

structions.—His parables are peculiarly interesting and important. In the parable of the prodigal son, the goodness of God is strikingly displayed; and an intimation given, as strong as the Jews could then bear, of his intended admission of the Gentiles into the Christian church *.——Alluding to the daring robberies, which had been committed in the desert, between Jerusalem and Jericho, he gives the beautiful and striking parable of the good Samaritan; in which the prejudices and contracted notions of the Jews towards strangers are admirably exposed, and a noble instance of humanity, and of the most disinterested beneficence, is proposed for our imitation †.

And, to give only one instance more, in which moral and religious truths are conveyed under rural images:—It was probably in seed-time, when he observed men engaged in cultivating the fields, on the borders of "the sea," or lake "of Galilee," that he delivered the instructive parable of the Sower: which is intended to shew the various effects, which the word of God produces on the minds of different

* Luke xv. 11—32. See also the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, Matth. xx. 1—16.

† Luke x. 25—37.

hearers,

hearers, according to the diversity of their tempers and dispositions, and the degree of their attention; and to point out, at the same time, the principal obstructions to our religious improvement *.

II. From these remarks on the manner of our Lord's instructions, and from the infinite importance and dignity of the subjects he illustrated, we are naturally led to consider the heavenly example, which he, at all times, displayed, as one convincing proof that he was the Son of God †. We all feel that human nature is far from being perfect. A life, free from every stain and imperfection, was never exhibited, but by that ineffably great and Divine Person ‡, who has revealed the most important truths, and may, in a peculiar manner, be styled, "The light of the world §." His whole life was adorned with the most exalted

* Matth. xiii. 1—43. † Matth. xxvii. 54.

‡ Isa. ix. 6, 7; and xl. 9—11. John i. 1—3. 14; and v. 18. Isa. xlv. 22, 23, compared with Rom. xiv. 11, 12. John viii. 56—58; and v. 22, 23. Matth. ix. 6; and xxviii. 18. 20. Philip. ii. 6—11. Col. i. 15—19; and ii. 9. Heb. i. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rev. i. 8. 18; v. 11—14; and xxii. 13.

§ John viii. 12.

piety, the most perfect benevolence, and the calmest resignation. Though he endured the greatest poverty, persecutions, and sufferings, yet he always submitted to the will of Providence, and never uttered the least complaint *. Consider the obscure and indigent life which he led on earth; the unembellished and unimpassioned style in which the Evangelists relate his severe sufferings; the exertions of his power, his wisdom, and his beneficence †; and the insatiable malignity of his enemies. Such a striking instance of patience, under the most trying afflictions, should excite us to be resigned to the dispensations of Providence ‡, which, in this life, we cannot understand; being well assured, that poverty and affliction, if sustained with pious resignation and fortitude, will be rewarded with eternal happiness in the world to come.——When we compare his conduct, and his sentiments, with the greatest and most amiable character which history records, we find a singular difference. In him, we always see a dignity of sentiment, a superiority of power, of wisdom, and of goodness, which

* Matth. viii. 20; and xxvi. 36—42.
† Matth. xiii. 54; and xx. 17—19. 28 Luke xix. 10.
‡ 1 Pet. ii. 20—23.

distinguished

distinguished him from all human beings; and shewed him to be Divine *. In his duty to God, we behold the most fervent devotion †; and, in his conduct to man, that disinterested and extensive beneficence which so eminently marked his whole life, and is peculiarly worthy of gratitude and admiration ‡. In short, his whole character, as delineated by the Evangelists with inimitable beauty, is exactly such as might be expected on a supposition, that there is another world, of which he had the clearest knowledge and conviction. It proves, beyond all doubt, that "he came from God" to instruct, to redeem, to reform the human race; and to prepare them for that heavenly kingdom, which consists of "righteousness, and peace, and spi-"ritual joy §."

It is true, you cannot, as he did, restore the dead to life ‖: you cannot feed four or five

* Matth. xi. 3—6. John iii. 2; and vii. 46. Luke xxiv. 32.

† John iv. 34. Matth. xiv. 23. John xvii. Heb. vii. 26.

‡ John xiii. 34, 35. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Acts x. 38. John xv. 13. Rom. v. 8. 10. John x. 14—18.

§ Rom. xiv. 17.

‖ John xi. 1—45. Luke vii. 11—15.

thousand people with a few loaves and fishes *; you cannot still those boisterous and unruly elements, the winds and the waves †: nor can you, in an instant, cure the most inveterate diseases by the utterance of a word ‡. These, and other astonishing miracles, recorded in the Gospel-history, are beyond the reach of human power §. But, in his piety to God, and his benevolence to man; in his patience and humility, in his mildness and gentleness of manners, in his love and forgiveness of enemies ||, and in all the other graces of his Divine character, you are called upon to imitate him; and, as far as human frailty will permit, to have "the same mind in you, that was also in Christ "Jesus ¶."

III. It may be useful to remark, that the truth of Christianity is further confirmed, not only by the example of our Saviour, but by the constancy, the intrepidity, and the fortitude of his Apostles. But let it be previously ob-

* Matth. xv. 33—38; and xiv. 20, 21.

† Matth. viii. 23—27. Psal. cvii. 21—30.

‡ Luke iv. 38, 39. Luke vi. 6—10; and xiii. 10—13. Matth. viii. 3. 5—15. John v. 1—9. Matth. ix. 20—22.

§ Mark vi. 2. || Luke xxiii. 34.

¶ Philip. ii. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 18.—If this Sermon should be found too long to be read at once, it may be divided here.

served,

served, that both Jews and Greeks opposed the progress of the Gospel. The tenets of the Christian religion were ungrateful to their sentiments, unsuitable to their expectations, and ill adapted to the inveterate prejudices, which prevailed among them. To be convinced of this, we must consider the several peculiarities of their religious and political constitution, their sentiments, their ceremonies, their laws, and their religion. But it would lead us into a disquisition too tedious, and too complex for our present purpose, to describe with minuteness the marked disparity between the Jews and the Greeks, in all these respects; to compare the absurdities of the Grecian mythology, with the ceremonies and precepts of the Mosaic dispensation; or to contrast the various forms of polytheism that prevailed at Athens and Rome, the two antient seats of science and literature, with the spiritual worship of the true God, a Being of infinite perfection, who requires moral rectitude from all his intelligent creatures. I shall therefore content myself with observing in general, and the remark will tend to keep our minds free from prepossession and self-conceit, that the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer equally militated against the worldly expecta-

tions of the Jews, and the refined eloquence of the Greeks.

The Jews had been accustomed to incessant miracles; they had expected, that their Messiah would descend from heaven in a visible manner; that he would appear in the greatest worldly grandeur; and that he would erect a secular empire, infinitely superior even to the Roman *.—You will here recollect the state of religion in Judea, in the time of our Saviour. The Scribes and Pharisees, two leading sects among the Jews, had corrupted the word of God, and rendered the divine "commandments "of none effect by their traditions†," and their Rabbinical explanations both of the law and of the Prophets. When the "Jews desired that "he would shew them a *sign* from heaven," a miracle in proof of his divine mission, his answer was, "an evil and adulterous generation "seeketh after a sign; but no sign shall be "given them, except that of the Prophet Jo-"nah. For, as Jonah was three days and three "nights in the whale's belly, so will the Son "of Man be three days and three nights in

* Dan. vii. 13, 14.

† Matth. xv. 1—6; and xxiii. 23.

"the

"the heart of the earth *." This figurative allusion was meant to convey to them an intimation of his death, his burial, and his resurrection from the dead. But their prejudices made them withstand the clearest evidence, and the most stupendous miracles. As he came not in the manner they expected, they concluded that he could not be the Messiah.

The Greeks, on the other hand, were a polished, an ingenious, and inquisitive people, highly celebrated for their acuteness in logical discussions, and for their proficiency in abstruse speculations; and, like the Jews, divided into religious sects and political parties. They spent much of their time in the acquisition of knowledge, and in the subtilties of their philosophy. Their theology was the religion of nature, sadly debased by impure, idolatrous, and superstitious rites; so debased indeed, that it cannot be compared with that holy religion, which has God for its Author, and the happiness of mankind for its object.

We need not, therefore, be surprised, that the doctrine of the cross, considered as the expiation of sin, should appear to be extremely

* Matth. xii. 38—40; and xvi. 1. 4. Jonah i. 17. John ii. 18—22.

improbable, and to be disgusting, both to the Jews and to the Greeks. However much they differed from each other in their religious principles, and in their national character and education, they agreed in their dislike and derision of this fundamental article of the Christian faith. The Apostle, however, does not attempt to conceal, to soften, or to palliate this doctrine *. He even speaks of it with an air of peculiar triumph and exultation, although the strongest prejudices were entertained against it. "God forbid," says he, "that I should glory, "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, "by whom the world is crucified unto me, and "I unto the world †." And, in the same emphatic manner, he says in another place, "The "Jews require a *sign*," an evidence of the interposition of Heaven, to convince their understanding, and engage their affections; "and "the Greeks seek after *wisdom*," the acquisition of science, and the fine arts, to gratify their curiosity ‡, and to subdue their minds by persuasion. "But *we* preach Christ crucified," we inculcate the doctrine of redemption from

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Gal. vi. 14.
‡ Acts xvii. 21.

sin

sin by the death of the Messiah, though "to the Jews it be a stumbling-block, and to "the Greeks foolishness. But to them that "are called," to those, who receive the precepts, and imbibe the spirit of the Gospel with unprejudiced minds, "both Jews and Greeks," it proves to be "the power of God, and the "wisdom of God *."

Let it here be remarked, that the grand and merciful discoveries, which revelation has made, concerning the designs of Heaven for our happiness, could never be attained by the powers of unassisted reason. Let it also be observed, that the province of reason is to examine and judge concerning the evidences of religion. Reason, when rightly exercised, can never be contrary to revelation; nor can revelation, when properly understood, be contrary to the dictates of reason. They are, in fact, the greatest blessings, which God bestows on man, emanations from the Fountain of goodness, bright rays from "the Father of lights †."

* 1 Cor. i. 22—24; ii. 6—8; and i. 19—21.

† James i. 17.

After

After this digression, if that be indeed a digression, which points out the prejudices and difficulties which the Apostles had to overcome, we may now remark, that Gamaliel, an eminent doctor of the law, shewed his piety and good sense by his advice, at a time when the Jewish council were highly incensed against them, and were likely to have put them to death. "Refrain from these men, and let "them alone: for if this counsel, or this work, "be of men, it will come to nought; but if "it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it *."

Accordingly, the doctrines which the Apostles taught, instead of sinking into disregard, soon baffled the most vigorous efforts of their inveterate and powerful adversaries †, and triumphed over Jewish bigotry, and heathen idolatry. And no other reason can be assigned for the rapid progress of Christianity, and for the astonishing change which took place in the sentiments, the temper, the manners, and the future views of the Apostles, after our Lord's resurrection, but that they found themselves endowed with preternatural power, and had

* Acts v. 38, 39.

† Luke xxi. 15. Mark xvi. 17, 18.

a well-

a well-grounded conviction, that he was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world. ——In proof of his divine mission, they appealed, among other facts, to his moral instructions, to the fulfilment of prophecies, to his stupendous miracles, whereof they were eye-witnesses, to his resurrection from the dead, and to that further illumination by the descent of the Holy Ghost, which was promised *, and was imparted to them, after his ascension, on the day of Pentecost †, when their minds were further enlightened, the nature of the Messiah's kingdom was fully explained, and they were enabled to work miracles in confirmation of the doctrines, which they were to preach ‡.

Consider therefore, with attention, the character and simplicity of the Apostles, and the difficulties which they encountered: They were illiterate men, of mean condition and employment, and totally unacquainted with the world: Yet they inculcated the most sub-

* John xvi. v. 12, 13. Luke xxiv. 49.

† Acts i. 4—8; ii. 1—4. 41—47; and iv. 31—35.

‡ Mark xvi. 20. Acts iii. 1—12; v. 1—16; ix. 32—42; xiv. 8—18; and xx. 7—12. Heb. ii. 4.

lime

lime and heavenly doctrines, and the soundest morality: They aimed at no temporal advantage: The dread of torture and death did not make them abandon their hopes, or renounce their faith: The gloom of ignorance, and the mists of idolatry and superstition, disappeared by their discourses and writings, as the shades of night on the approach of the rising sun: Nations, formerly ignorant, savage, and addicted to the worst crimes, were soon enlightened, civilized, and reformed: Countries, as had been predicted, that had "sat in the region of darkness," emerged from barbarism or ignorance, and became, by their means, the happy realms of light *.

What are we to infer from all this? Certainly we must infer, that the Apostles were supported by an inward conviction, that they were suffering for the truth: That, by the divine energy, they were propagating principles, which promoted the improvement and happiness of mankind: That they had an irresistible evidence that Christianity was sup-

* Isa. ix. 2. Matth. xxviii. 16. 18—20. Acts xxvi. 15—18.

ported

ported by supernatural means*: That they felt its more than human consolations: That they had the clearest and most satisfactory proofs of our Lord's resurrection†: And, amidst the severest trials and persecutions, that they were animated by the firmest belief of immortality‡.

Candidly weigh all these circumstances. Consider well the superior excellence of our Lord's instructions, and his mode of conveying them; the transcendent dignity of his nature, and the peculiar manner of his life. Reflect also on the conduct of the Apostles, and the wisdom of their doctrines: Consider their piety, their benevolence, their patience; the purity of their manners, their ardent love for their Creator and Redeemer, as they shine forth in the New Testament; and you will feel a strong conviction of the truth and excellence of Christianity, and that the religion which they taught was from Heaven. All this

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† Luke xxiv. 36—40. John xx. 19—29. Acts i. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 1—8. 19, 20; Acts xiii. 30—37; and xxvi. 22, 23.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 1; and iv. 16—18. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

accounts

accounts for their ardour, for the extraordinary success of their ministry, and for the dissemination of the Christian faith, through a great part of the world. "My discourse, and my "preaching," says one of the most zealous and learned of them, "was not with persuasive "words of human wisdom;" it was not embellished by ornaments of a studied elocution. And the reason which he assigns is striking: "That," to the conviction of every impartial mind, "your faith might not stand in the "wisdom of men, but in the power of "God *."

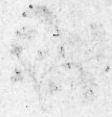
The divine character then of our Saviour, the excellence of his doctrines and precepts, and the actions and writings of his Apostles, most clearly prove the truth of our religion, powerfully excite us to imitate his example, and are strong intimations and evidences of a future state.——His precepts, while they are designed to form and prepare us for immortality, are peculiarly calculated to rectify our principles of action, to govern our passions

* 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

and

and temper, and thereby to promote general order and happiness, even in this life. This will be further illustrated and confirmed, when we come next to consider the important duties, which we owe to ourselves.

SERMON



SERMON VIII.

JAMES, i. 27.

Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this———to keep one's self unspotted from the world.

HAVING treated, on a former occasion, of those duties, which we owe to our neighbours, I proceed to consider those, which we owe to ourselves.

Now, it is evident, that man was designed for some sphere of active duty; and that, while he can support himself by virtuous industry, he has no claim to a maintenance from others. There are few, indeed, who are not obliged to

earn their subsistence by hard labour*: and those who are above this necessity have other important duties, which their station imposes. God has bestowed various talents among men; to some he has given five talents; to others, two; and to others, only one†. But all are required to dedicate to him every talent, and every faculty; to improve their minds and morals; and to follow some useful and virtuous employment. This is what every one owes to society, as well as to himself.

And this leads me to guard you, in the first place, against idleness. When a man once abandons himself to indolent habits, and misspends that time which should be employed in the important business of his station; when, instead of being useful, he neglects the duties which he owes to those with whom he is most nearly connected, he becomes a worthless member of society; and we ought to avoid his company. Solomon gives a most lively and awful description of the wretched state of the sluggard, from which we may derive an useful lesson. "I went by the field of the slothful,

* Gen. iii. 19. 2 Thess. iii. 10—12.

† Matth. xxv. 14—30.

"and

" and by the vineyard of the man void of un-
" derstanding: And lo! it was all grown over
" with thorns; and nettles had covered the
" face thereof; and the stone-wall thereof was
" broken down. Then I saw and considered it
" well: I looked upon it, and received instruc-
" tion *." Indolent habits, then, produce poverty †. But this is not the only mischief. Besides other evils, which need not be enumerated, they totally prevent the improvement of the mind or fortune, and expose us to the most destructive vices.—Remember, therefore, the awful words of Scripture: " If any provide not for his
" own, and especially for those of his own house,
" he hath denied the faith, and is worse than
" an infidel ‡." This sufficiently shews us the guilt and misery of idleness. It proves, that we should be engaged in the business of active life §; and that we must be accountable for our conduct to the great Judge of all the earth ||.

Another vice, against which you must be carefully admonished, is drunkenness. Men, habitually intemperate, lose their time, diminish their property, and degrade their characters.

* Prov. xxiv. 30—32.
† Prov. vi. 6—8.
‡ 1 Tim. v. 8.
§ Rom. xii. 11.
|| Luke xix. 13.

They inflame their passions, and create dissensions. They impair their constitution, bring on various disorders, and reduce their families to ruin. They disqualify themselves for every duty, are prepared to violate every law, and become guilty of many gross follies and vices.—Such are the baneful consequences of habits of intoxication.

To avoid these mischiefs to ourselves and to others, God has given us a moral law to regulate our conduct, on the observance of which the peace, the order, and the happiness of society depend. We are enjoined, to "deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live "soberly, righteously, and godly *." If, therefore, we violate the rules of sobriety and moral rectitude, we injure ourselves; we introduce confusion and misery among mankind; and, without sincere repentance, we shall at last be excluded from that blessed society of perfect spirits in a better world. For to attain future happiness, our nature must be purified from vicious habits. God is a pure and holy Spirit, and cannot dwell in an impure and polluted heart †. We must, therefore, eradicate, as far as we are

* Titus ii. 12.

† Isa. lvii. 15. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Prov. xv. 8, 9.

able,

able, every sinful propensity; we must avoid the solicitations of bad company; we must subdue the impulse of sensual passions *; and we must acquire habits of self-government and purity. This sobriety consists not in a renunciation of the comforts and enjoyments of life. True religion requires no such sacrifice †. It consists in guarding against criminal excess ‡; in restraining our appetites within the bounds of reason and religion; in taking care that our minds be sound and well-regulated §, and not contaminated by pride, envy, or revenge; and in cultivating, through Divine grace, the seeds of every Christian virtue — "love, "joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, good-"ness, fidelity, meekness, temperance ||." A Christian, then, can neither be slothful, dissipated, nor intemperate. For, by indolence or drunkenness, our bodily and our mental powers are weakened and debased. In the Apostolic age, the manners of the Pagans were extremely dissolute ¶. Christianity has certainly introduced a considerable improvement into the state

* Gal. v. 19—21. 24.
† 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. Eccles. v. 18, 19.
‡ Prov. xxiii. 29—33. 20, 21. § Mark vii. 14—23.
|| Gal. v. 22, 23. ¶ See Rom. i. 18—32.

of society. But, if its divine precepts were universally observed; if piety, probity, benevolence, and temperance, regulated all our sentiments and conduct; what a change would still take place in the world! What love and gratitude to God! What justice and veracity, what peace and charity, among men! And what sobriety and chastity towards ourselves!

The difficulties of the Christian life are frequently represented in Scripture, under the similitude of a race or warfare *. "Know ye "not," says the Apostle to the Corinthians, "that they who run in a race, run all, but one "receiveth the prize? So run that ye may ob- "tain. And every one that contendeth, is "temperate in all things: they, indeed, to ob- "tain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorrup- "tible †." Now as we are candidates for a higher existence, and, in this probationary state, must exercise a strict discipline over our passions and temper, it may be useful to illustrate the propriety of his allusion. His object was, to recommend the government of the heart, and to shew that, without perseverance and self-denial,

* 1 Tim. i. 18; vi. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 1.
† 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.

without

without overcoming the temptations of the world, and without a careful attention to the duties of our station, we cannot hope to obtain that immortal prize, for which we are contending. With this view, he compares the reward, which will be given to good men in a future state, with the prizes offered to the competitors at the Isthmian games, which were celebrated near Corinth. In these Grecian games, the contest was merely for a fading "crown," for a wreath of perishable leaves, which for a while could only adorn the brow of the victor. But "the "crown" for which Christians contend, is infinitely more glorious and valuable. It is, be it ever remembered, for "a crown of righteous-"ness *;" for "a crown of life †;" for "a "crown of glory, which fadeth not away ‡."

Two circumstances cannot fail to attract our attention, and excite our diligence. First, we observe that, in those games, only one gained the prize; but, in the Christian race, all may obtain the inestimable reward, who endeavour to overcome the difficulties which they have to encounter, and to fulfil their appointed course

* 2 Tim. iv. 8. † James i. 12.
‡ 1 Pet. v. 4.

of trial. Next, we observe that, even in those trivial contests, and for the sake of a little worldly applause, the candidates were "temperate in all things," were willing to undergo many difficulties, and to submit to many inconveniences. When we consider then the high, the immense prize for which *we* contend, and the Christian conflict in which we are engaged, surely we have the greatest reason to guard our hearts, with sedulous and unremitting attention, from the dominion of passion; and to be influenced by the principles, the promises, and the views which Christianity has set before us.—To our own earnest endeavours, therefore, for the government of our passions, and the improvement of our nature, let us daily add our fervent prayers to God *, to enable us, by his grace, to resist every temptation, to overcome the most powerful solicitations that may assail us †, and, at last, through his mercy in Christ Jesus, to attain a state of future and immortal happiness. "Be ye faithful unto death, and ye shall receive a crown of life ‡."

* Luke xi. 13.

† James i. 13, 14. Rom. viii. 26. 1 Cor. x. 13.

‡ Rev. ii. 10.

Thus

Thus it appears that, besides the duties which we owe to God and man, there is an essential and difficult branch of Christianity, the duty of purity or self-government, which is clearly and accurately expressed by the phrase of "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."

With regard then to the duties which we owe to ourselves, Christianity inculcates sanctity of heart, by teaching, in the strong, figurative language of the Apostle, that our bodies are the "temples of the Holy Ghost*;" and that, if we do not resist the influence of that Spirit, we must avoid every impurity, which, in this state of moral probation, they are liable to contract. Now, we all know, that we are prone to gratify our irregular desires, which are the most frequent disturbers of our tranquillity. We should, therefore, endeavour, by God's grace, to govern our thoughts, our passions, and our tempers; and to cultivate sobriety, temperance, modesty, and chastity†. This duty of self-government certainly tends to restrain our turbulent passions, and to improve our minds in virtue. But it must be confessed, that this ab-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19; and iii. 16, 17.

†. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Rom. xiii. 12—14.

stinence

stinence from immoral practices, and criminal pleasures, is a most arduous task. This sanctity of heart, however, this purity of manners, this regularity in private conduct, is what Christianity expressly enjoins *; and is, perhaps, one of the most convincing and unequivocal proofs of the sincerity of our Christian principles.

On this subject it may be remarked, that the doctrines of Mahomet were extremely captivating to the human heart, and well adapted to the sentiments of an illiterate, superstitious, and licentious people, whom that impostor designed to mislead. With the sword in one hand, and the Koran in the other, he soon made many converts; but, though this pretended prophet of Arabia † had not propagated his tenets by the sword, as he inculcated those loose principles, and false morals, which spring from a depraved heart, there is no doubt but many would have flocked to his standard, and readily embraced a religion, which indulged their prejudices, and kept their passions under no restraint. The Mahometan paradise was admirably calculated to excite their gross and sensual de-

* Rom. xii. 1—3. Tit. ii. 1—6.

† Matth. xxiv. 11. Dan. viii. 23—25; and xi. 41—45. Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

sires.

sires. But widely different is the religion of Christ *; and this difference is an unequivocal testimony of its truth: it allows the indulgence of no criminal pleasure, and expressly requires us, to subdue every irregular inclination, and to cultivate moral purity, and virtuous habits, before we can be admitted into the regions of future bliss, or can attain that permanent and exalted happiness, which it unfolds to our view.

Let us guard, then, with vigilance and circumspection, against those vicious habits, those sensual passions †, which pervert the judgment, and debase the moral faculty; and study, through Divine assistance, to be sober, chaste, and modest. And, having "exceeding great "and precious promises" made to us in the Gospel, let us endeavour to rectify our inward disorders, and to "cleanse ourselves from all "pollution of the flesh and spirit," with the view of "perfecting holiness in the fear of "God ‡."

* Matth. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14. Rev. xxi. 27. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Psal. xxiv. 3—5; and xv. 1, 2.

† 1 Pet. ii. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Pet. i—3.

But,

But, though these heavenly duties are strongly inculcated in Scripture, though they are approved by the dictates of every unbiassed mind, and though they are enforced by the most powerful sanctions, yet, alas! such is our natural weakness and depravity, we often feel a conflict between virtuous principles and vicious affections; an inclination impelling us to evil, contrary to our clearest judgment, our firmest resolution, and, what we know to be, our highest interest. This strong propensity to vice and folly is deeply lamented by the Apostle, and termed by him, "a law in our members "warring against the law of our minds, and "bringing them into captivity*;" and this is the unhappy state, to which even the best men are frequently reduced, by the frailty and depravity of human nature, and the prevalence of temptation. When a Christian is conscious, that he has thus done wrong, and in the spirit of contrition and self-abasement is anxious to return to the path of duty, blessed be God, he is happily freed from those doubts and disquietudes, which, without the aid of revelation, agitate the thoughtful, though penitent mind, about

* Rom. vii. 22, 23.

the

the means of forgiveness; and which, among other expedients, led men, in all ages, to hope for the expiation of sin, by a strict observance of ritual services, and by the oblation of the richest, propitiatory sacrifices *.

Man, in his best estate, is a fallible, imperfect creature, subjected to bodily corruption, and mental disorder; but the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of our Saviour, that *he* was "holy, harmless, and undefiled †." In this respect, he is eminently distinguished from all other beings. This sanctity of life was exhibited, in a most striking manner, by our blessed Lord, who was exposed to all the evils of humanity, except the propensity to sin. His life and his doctrines, we have seen, are equally perfect; they equally evince his Divine nature, and deserve the serious attention of those who reject, as well as those who believe the Gospel. "Never man spake," and never man acted, "like this man ‡."

Let us, therefore, study to imitate his heavenly example §, who, in great benignity, came

* Micah vi. 6—9. Mark xii. 33, Acts x. 43. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Rom. iii. 24, 25.

† Heb. vii. 26. Heb. iv. 15. ‡ John vii. 46.

§ Philip. ii. 5. John xiii. 15.

to

to restore order among the works of God. Let us fervently pray to him for divine light to guide our steps, and for divine strength to govern our minds. Let us earnestly beseech him to give us grace to guard against violent passions, and a corrupted heart, the internal enemies of human happiness. And let us endeavour, through his assistance, to "keep the heart with "all diligence: for out of it are the issues "of life *."

From all this you will understand that the principal parts of "pure religion" consist in piety to God; in justice and beneficence to man; and in a due regulation of our minds, our words, and our actions. Its great object is, to rectify our nature, and to "deliver us from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious "liberty of the children of God †."

Now, what a sublime idea does all this give us of the benevolence of the Deity, in thus enlightening, improving, and perfecting human nature; and in gradually raising us to that happiness which was forfeited by the fall! What a stupendous proof of the divine be-

* Prov. iv. 23. † Rom. viii. 21.

nignity

nignity is here exhibited in our redemption! and how should it excite in our breasts the warmest sentiments of love, gratitude, and devotion! Examine, with candour and attention, the doctrines and precepts of the New Testament, and you will not find, that any of them are contrary to our natural sentiments of God, or to the best wishes of the human heart. No: They all tend to the glory of God, and to the real good of man; and they all shew, in a striking light, the beauty, the excellence, and the importance of Christianity.

The speculative unbeliever, indeed, aiming to exalt human reason, may reject the authority, and deny the necessity of revelation. The hypocrite may flatter himself, that a strict observance of some duties of religion may compensate for the violation, or habitual neglect, of others. The enthusiast, mistaking the effects of a warm imagination for Divine operations, may wait for extraordinary impulses of the spirit, to guide him into truth*. And the profligate, who perpetrates crimes of the most atrocious nature, may endeavour to weaken his belief of a future existence, and to reject a religion, which

* John iii. 8.

denounces

denounces the most severe and lasting punishment on his daring wickedness *. But the great truths of Christianity, as they are displayed in the New Testament, in their native purity and "simplicity †," are so consonant to reason, so conformable to the genuine sentiments of our nature, and so congenial to the human heart, that no efforts will ever be effectual to make a Christian renounce the clearest principles of religion and morality, and the animating hope of eternal life ‡. Hence the Apostles, when they were instructed by their Divine Master in some of the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, adhered to its principles amidst all the peculiar dangers and difficulties which they had to encounter. "Lord, "to whom should we go? Thou hast the "words of eternal life: and we believe, and "are sure, that thou art the Messiah, the Son of "the living God §."

Thus far, then, you see, from the clear and amiable views that the Gospel has given us of the Supreme Being, and of the relation in

* Matth. xxv. 46. † 2 Cor. xi. 3.
‡ Luke ix. 23—26. Rom. i. 16; and ii. 4—10.
§ John vi. 68, 69.

which

which we stand to him,—and to each other,—and of the duties which we owe to ourselves,—in what sense, and in what way, the great Author of our religion has enlightened the world, by the doctrines which he has taught, and by the precepts which he has inculcated.

In the next discourse, we shall proceed to consider the momentous information, which he has given us, about the future destination of the human race; and the effects, which it should produce on our minds and conduct.

SERMON IX.

2 TIM. i. 10.

—Who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

FROM Christianity we have learned many important truths, which, by the "light" of nature, the wisest Heathen was unable fully to discover. To make this more obvious to you, let us now consider the momentous information, which our Lord has given us, about the future destination of the human race. And, let it here be observed, as an extraordinary fact, that, though men may differ in capacity, in character, and in civilization; yet, perhaps, there has

not been discovered a single nation, however savage and barbarous, either in ancient or modern times, where the belief of a state of future rewards and punishments has been totally extinct. We find, however, that those who only enjoyed the "light" of nature, had many doubts and perplexities on this interesting subject. It is true, there is a principle in the human heart, which shudders at the idea of annihilation, and leads men to entertain some notion of a future retribution; but it is revelation alone that removes every apprehension about it, and offers to the humble, the pious, and the penitent, a recompence infinitely greater than this turbulent world can bestow; a reward not commensurate to their services, but to the riches of Divine grace, "through the redemption "that is in Jesus*." For, "eye hath not "seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered "into the human heart" to form any adequate conception of the happiness, which "God hath "prepared for those who love him †."

As many of you are engaged in agriculture, and other rural occupations, and have constant opportunities of observing the progress of vege-

* Rom. iii. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9. † 1 Cor. ii. 9.

tation,

tation, and the great changes it undergoes, it may be proper to call your attention to part of the Apostle's beautiful strain of reasoning, in proof of a resurrection. Observe, then, this wonderful, though common process in the vegetable world. When a grain of seed is sown, and buried in the ground, it seems to undergo a total dissolution, and to lose all power of renovation; but the great Author of Nature, by the secret and unknown laws of vegetation, makes it revive, and shoot forth with renewed vigour *. Now, this analogy of nature is no less astonishing to the learned than to the illiterate; and is a striking indication of a resurrection, and of a higher destination, which the Gospel gives us reason to expect †. When the human body dies, and is mouldered into dust, God, who is omnipotent, can and will, in his own time and manner, raise it to a perfect, a spiritualized, and an eternal life ‡.

The resurrection of the body, and a future state of rewards and punishments, are peculiar and fundamental articles of our religion. Christianity expressly informs us, that there will be a

* John xii. 24, 25. † 1 Cor. xv. 35—38. 42—44.
‡ Philip. iii. 21. 2 Cor. v. 1. 4. 10. Col. iii. 4.

resurrection of the "dead, both of the just and "unjust *." It has, therefore, dispelled those doubts and uncertainties, in which the human mind was involved, and gives good men the surest hopes of a happy immortality. The suggestions of reason, aided by the "light" of revelation, are sufficient to produce the strongest conviction. Accordingly our Lord, who, with great sublimity, called himself "The resurrec-"tion and the life †," gave several striking and incontrovertible evidences of this most important and essential truth, by raising, not only others ‡, but even himself, from the dead §. In allusion to these astonishing miracles, he announces with authority, that "The hour is coming, "when all that are in their graves shall hear "the voice of the Son of God, and shall come "forth: they that have done good unto the re-"surrection of life; and they that have done "evil, unto the resurrection of condemna-"tion ||." What a glorious, yet awful assurance is this! Well might it be asserted by the

* Acts xxiv. 15. Gal. vi. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 14. Matth. x. 28.
† John xi. 25.
‡ Mark v. 35—42. Luke vii. 11—17. John xi. 1—46.
§ John ii. 18, 19. Matth. xxviii. 1—6. Acts xxvi. 22, 23.
|| John v. 28, 29. Matth. xxv. 46.

Apostle.

Apostle in the text, that "life and immortality "are brought to light through the Gospel *."

The New Testament, beyond all doubt, has given a more express assurance, a more open display, of a blessed immortality, than any former revelation had done. But surely, in the Old Testament, there are not wanting several strong intimations of another life, and that man

* The word φωτισαντος, which is here translated brought "to light," more properly denotes, in this place, made "clear." Φωτιζειν, from φως, *light*, signifies *to enlighten, to make known, to illustrate, to throw light upon.* Thus, John i. 9. ὁ φωτιζει παντα ανθρωπον, *who enlighteneth every man:* where the Evangelist applies this passage to the Messiah, emphatically called by him, το φως το αληθινον, *the true light.* Thus also, Eph. iii. 9. Και φωτισαι παντας, *et omnibus præ lucere, and to make all men see, or understand:* where the Apostle refers to the mystery, or secret, which had been concealed from ages and generations,—that God would call the Gentiles, and receive them into his church,—but was, soon after the Christian æra, revealed to the Apostles, to be by them promulgated to the world.—The same expression occurs in 1 Cor. iv. 5. and is applied to our Lord, ὁς και φωτισει, *who both will bring to light* the hidden things of darkness, and lay open the counsels of the hearts. And, in like manner, Arrian, in Epictet. i. 4. αληθειαν φωτιζειν, *to elucidate the truth.* This will serve to explain the import of φωτιζω, and the meaning of the Apostle in the text: Both Jews and Gentiles had an imperfect knowledge of a future state; but the important doctrine of "immortal life," which was formerly obscure, and of the "resurrection of the body," of which they had no conception, "is now *made clear* through the "Gospel." 1 Cor. xv. 44. 50—54.

will not have the same final destiny with the brutes. I shall only mention two passages. One is taken from the prophecy of Daniel, and is so clear and explicit, that it requires no comment. "Many," says he, "that sleep in the "dust shall awake; some to everlasting life; "and some, to shame and everlasting con-"tempt*." The other passage is taken from the book of Exodus, where God manifested himself to Moses under this gracious title: "I "am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, "and the God of Jacob†;" and it is so well illustrated by the conversation, which took place between our Saviour and the Sadducees, that I shall avail myself of the "light" he has thrown upon it.

The Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, or its existence after death ‡, came to him with a view to embarrass him, and to overthrow all the arguments that could be adduced, either from reason, or from Scripture, in favour of a future state. But, though they came to him with such an insidious design, as it was a matter of the last importance, he condescended not only to solve the difficulty which

* Dan. xii. 2, 3.
† Exod. iii. 6.
‡ Acts xxiii. 8.

they

they had started, but, at the same time, gave the most sublime idea of the happiness of Heaven. "The children of this world marry, and "are given in marriage. But they," says he, "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that "world, and the resurrection from the dead, "neither marry nor are given in marriage. "Neither can they die any more, being the "children of the resurrection. Ye, therefore, "greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor "the power of God*." "Not knowing the "Scriptures," ye conclude that the doctrine of a future state is not contained in them, as ye have overlooked it; and, not considering "the "Divine power," ye deem it incredible even "that God should raise the dead†." But the future world will be constructed very differently from the present. And, in effect, Moses shewed that there would be another life, when he called the Lord who appeared to him, "the "God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of "Jacob," long after those Patriarchs were crumbled into dust. For certainly, he cannot be called the God of those whose existence terminated with this life; but the God of those,

* Matth. xxii. 29. Luke xx. 27—40.

† Acts xxvi. 8.

who,

who, though removed from this state of trial, still worship and serve him, and are in a happier and better world.

And thus we see, however some of the Jews might overlook, or misinterpret, the doctrine of a future state, it is implied and supposed in the Old Testament *. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us, that faith has been the leading principle of the wisest and the best of men from the earliest times; that they believed in the promises of the Messiah; and that they looked for "a better and a *heavenly* "country †."

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, "the evidence of things not seen ‡." This is an accurate definition which the Apostle hath left on record of that sacred principle, which bears us through all the struggles and temptations, the sorrows and calamities attendant on our probationary state.

* Luke xvi. 29—31. See also Gen. v. 24, compared with Heb. xi. 5. 2 Sam. xii. 23. Eccles. xii. 7: 14. Job xix. 25—27. Psal. xvi. 10, 11; xvii. 15; and lxxiii. 24—26. Isa. xxv. 8; xxvi. 19; and lvii. 1, 2.

† Heb. xi. 13—16. John x. 27, 28; and viii. 56. Luke xiv. 14.

‡ Heb. xi. 1. Rom. viii. 24.

Assisted

Assisted by the "light" of the Gospel, *we* can behold Abraham, the father of the faithful, and "Lazarus in his bosom *," in a world of bliss, adorned with the beauty of holiness and immortality, and reposing under the protection of the Almighty. And, if we be actuated by the same pious and humble spirit, we shall, in God's good time, be removed from a scene of sorrows and difficulties, and translated to a state of perfect and endless happiness †.

A Christian, then, has the greatest reason to rejoice, that his views are not confined to this short and precarious state of existence ‡. Amidst all the poverty and afflictions, the pain and sickness, which may have befallen him, his mind is animated with the hope of a blessed resurrection. Amidst the most depressing calamities, he sees a more serene and enlivening prospect, where he shall have "an inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not "away §;" and where there shall be neither "death, nor sorrow, nor pain ‖."

* Luke xvi. 23.

† Heb. xi. 8—10. Matth. viii. 11. Rom. iv. 23—25.

‡ John xiv. 1—3. Rom. viii. 18—23.

§ 1 Pet. i. 4. ‖ Rev. xxi. 4; and xiv. 13.

Take

who, though removed from this state of trial, still worship and serve him, and are in a happier and better world.

And thus we see, however some of the Jews might overlook, or misinterpret, the doctrine of a future state, it is implied and supposed in the Old Testament *. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us, that faith has been the leading principle of the wisest and the best of men from the earliest times; that they believed in the promises of the Messiah; and that they looked for "a better and a *heavenly* "country †."

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, "the evidence of things not seen ‡." This is an accurate definition which the Apostle hath left on record of that sacred principle, which bears us through all the struggles and temptations, the sorrows and calamities attendant on our probationary state.

* Luke xvi. 29—31. See also Gen. v. 24, compared with Heb. xi. 5. 2 Sam. xii. 23. Eccles. xii. 7: 14. Job xix. 25—27. Psal. xvi. 10, 11; xvii. 15; and lxxiii. 24—26. Isa. xxv. 8; xxvi. 19; and lvii. 1, 2.

† Heb. xi. 13—16. John x. 27, 28; and viii. 56. Luke xiv. 14.

‡ Heb. xi. 1. Rom. viii. 24.

Assisted

Assisted by the "light" of the Gospel, *we* can behold Abraham, the father of the faithful, and "Lazarus in his bosom *," in a world of bliss, adorned with the beauty of holiness and immortality, and reposing under the protection of the Almighty. And, if we be actuated by the same pious and humble spirit, we shall, in God's good time, be removed from a scene of sorrows and difficulties, and translated to a state of perfect and endless happiness †.

A Christian, then, has the greatest reason to rejoice, that his views are not confined to this short and precarious state of existence ‡. Amidst all the poverty and afflictions, the pain and sickness, which may have befallen him, his mind is animated with the hope of a blessed resurrection. Amidst the most depressing calamities, he sees a more serene and enlivening prospect, where he shall have "an inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not "away §;" and where there shall be neither "death, nor sorrow, nor pain ‖."

* Luke xvi. 23.
† Heb. xi. 8—10. Matth. viii. 11. Rom. iv. 23—25.
‡ John xiv. 1—3. Rom. viii. 18—23.
§ 1 Pet. i. 4. ‖ Rev. xxi. 4; and xiv. 13.

Take

Take away the firm belief of a wise and good Providence, that governs the affairs of the universe; convince a man, that this life is the whole of his existence; that he is a wretched pilgrim, abandoned to the caprice of chance and fortune, in a vale of woe; and that he has nothing to hope, or to fear, beyond the grave: and you will embitter his life, and rob him of his greatest comfort. Like a vessel, tossed on a tempestuous ocean, without any means to brave the storm, his desponding heart would be ready to be overwhelmed with grief and despair.—— On the other hand, impress his mind with proper notions of God's perfections and moral government *; remove every doubt about his future existence; and animate him with the hope, that Providence will guide him through this mortal state †, and, at last, conduct him to a better world ‡: and he feels the most soothing consolation amidst all the trials, the losses, the disappointments, and the distresses, of human life, and looks forward, with pleasing expectation, to that happy but unknown period,

* Psal. lviii. 11.
† Matth. x. 29, 30. Psal. xxvii. 5. John xiv, 27.
‡ Heb. xiii. 14.

when

when there will be a perpetual cessation of sorrow, and "all tears shall be wiped away from his "eyes *." Delightful thought! How it cheers the virtuous breast, and sweetens the bitter cup of affliction! Under every calamity of life, and even at the approach of dissolution, a good man supports himself with the reflection, that the light afflictions of mortality "will work "out for him an exceeding and eternal weight "of glory †." Though he look forwards to the trying hour, when he is to leave his disconsolate family, exposed to various distresses; yet his solicitude is removed, when he reflects, that they will be under the protection of the same heavenly Father, who has comforted him in his troubles; has conducted him through the various scenes of life; and has enabled him to overcome all the trials and difficulties of this mortal state ‡. Animated by his Christian faith §, and supported by those moral probabilities of a future life, arising from the nature of man, and the perfections of God, he resigns, with composure,

* Rev. vii. 17. Heb. iv. 9.

† 2 Cor. iv. 17. John xvi. 33. Habak. iii. 17, 18. Psal. xciv. 19.

‡ Psal. xxiii.

§ 1 John v. 4. Luke xxiii. 46. 2 Tim iv. 6—8.

himself,

himself, his friends, and his family, to the protection of that Being, who, in tender compassion, hath said, "Fear not, for I am with "thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God*." —"Leave thy fatherless children, I will pre-"serve them alive, and let thy widow trust in "me†."

On this subject we may be permitted to dwell with more than common earnestness, since it is the foundation of Christian hope, the greatest motive to constancy in piety and virtue, and a principal source of consolation to the mind. For never was there a period which shews more forcibly, than that in which we live, the precarious tenure of all earthly enjoyments, and the importance of aspiring after higher and more permanent objects, than any which this world can bestow.

Let it be further observed then, that a future and eternal state, though not so displayed as to withdraw our attention from the proper business of life, is yet sufficiently powerful to elevate our minds, and to be productive of the most beneficial influence, both on individuals, and on

* Isa. xli. 10. † Jer. xlix. 11.

society.

society. The weary traveller is no longer involved in the "darkness" of night. The "Sun "of righteousness has arisen *," has dissipated those clouds, which hang so thick and heavy about him, and has diffused "light," and knowledge, and truth. While you are depressed with poverty or affliction, you have still the animating "hope of eternal life †," and of salvation, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. It is this hope, and this only, that can, and *does* support the human mind, under the severest pressure of affliction, on the death of your nearest and dearest friends ‡, and at the close of your own life. Amidst every trial, whether natural or moral, the Gospel affords the greatest consolation to man; and you cannot be sufficiently thankful for its important discoveries. Its benign effects, however, are, at present, but imperfectly seen. But, at the day of final retribution, its sacred influence will be visible, in having promoted the moral government of God; in having turned many millions of mankind from "darkness to light §;" in having diffused instruction, consolation, vir-

* Mal. iv. 2. † Titus iii. 7. 1 John ii. 25. Col. i. 5.
‡ 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. § Acts xxvi. 18.

tue,

tue, and happiness, among them; and in having trained them up, through a progressive state of religious and moral improvement, to a participation of a higher and happier state of existence, where, "that which is perfect "being come, that which is in part shall be "done away *."

From some expressions of Scripture we may infer, that the benefits of our Lord's death do extend, in some sense, to all men: as well to those who have been ignorant of revelation, as to those who have been enlightened by the Christian faith †. "Now," indeed, "we see "through a glass darkly ‡;" but, if we believe the doctrines, imbibe the principles, and practise the precepts, of his religion, we may rest assured, that his merits and intercession will procure for us a title to salvation; and that, in a future state, our views will be enlarged, our faculties improved, and we shall be permitted to have nearer access to the fountain of "light, "of goodness, and of happiness §." Then, the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

† 1 John ii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. vi. 23.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

§ Matth. v. 8; and xiii. 43. 1 John iii. 2. Psal. xxxvi. 9. Rev. vii. 9—17.

moral

moral government of God will be fully displayed; then, all the disorders, and seeming irregularities of the present scene, will be rectified: vice will be punished, and virtue rewarded. And then, the great work of redemption, devised by Providence from the first, will be finally completed, and will fill the minds of the redeemed with an ecstacy of wonder, love, and gratitude, which no power of language can express. "The ransomed of "the Lord shall enter into Sion with triumph; "and everlasting joy shall be on their heads: "they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sor- "row and sighing shall flee away *."

After this explanation of the manner in which our Lord hath *enlightened* the world †, after considering the various benefits we derive from revelation, it only remains for me briefly to enforce the Apostle's advice, and to shew the general influence which these Christian principles ought to produce on your minds, and behaviour. "*Walk as children of light* ‡."

In the first place, Amidst all the trials and vicissitudes of human life, let us ever thank

* Isa. xxxv. 10. † John xii. 46. ‡ Eph. v. 8.

God for the singular and unspeakable advantages which result from Christianity *. Let us remember, however, that other churches † have enjoyed the "light" of revelation; but, by their sad defection from good principles, and true religion, have again relapsed into Pagan darkness. Let this guard us against licentious principles and degenerate manners. And let it excite us to shew our gratitude and obedience to our Redeemer, for all he hath done and suffered for the fallen race of men ‡; and to be solicitous to practise every duty, which can recommend us to his approbation.—From the extensive view which we have taken of this subject, it is obvious that the Christian religion strongly enforces pious affections, and virtuous conduct, and that our faith and life should be regulated by its doctrines and precepts §. It is the express declaration of Scripture, that "ye "are not your own; for ye are bought with a "price" of inestimable value, even with the

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Rom. viii. 32. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

† The seven celebrated churches of Asia, mentioned in the beginning of the Revelations.

‡ 2 Cor. v 14. Rev. i. 5, 6; and v. 9—14. Heb. ix. 14, 15. Philip. ii. 6—8. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Isa. liii. 4—6.

§ Rom. xii 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iv. 11. 21.

precious

precious "blood of Christ, and are therefore" bound to employ your faculties in the service of God, and to "glorify him with your body, "and with your spirit, which are God's *."

Let us endeavour, then, to please our great Benefactor; to be useful in our stations; and to be actuated by the Divine principles which we profess. With humble and grateful hearts, let us worship and serve God, and daily bless him for the "light" of Christianity †. But, let us ever remember, that the punishment of a poor heathen, who, in an unenlightened age, had deviated from the path of moral rectitude, will be far less severe ‡, than what awaits any of *us*, who, in this Christian country, and with such means of improving our nature, have loved "darkness rather than light §," have neglected the duties of our station, have perverted the gifts of Providence to bad purposes, and, in spite of every overture of grace and mercy, have persisted in the ways of vice ||.

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. Col. i. 12, 13.
‡ Luke xii. 48. § John iii. 19. Heb. ii. 3.
|| 2 Pet. ii. 21. Luke vi. 46—49; xi. 27, 28.

In the second place, All the principles, and all the precepts of the Gospel, tend to sanctify the heart, and concur in enforcing a sober, a virtuous, and devout life *; and in evincing the importance and necessity of piety, justice, charity, and purity. Those discoveries of a state of immortality, which we enjoy, and which enable us to bear with patience the pains of disease, and the various distresses of life, naturally lead us, as moral agents, to cultivate integrity of conduct, and to prize, beyond expression, that divine religion, which removes every apprehension about our future existence. They are not intended, however, to gratify an idle curiosity, but to reform the heart, and to influence the practice †.—Remember, then, that every moral duty is enforced on evangelical principles, by the most awful sanctions; and that the precepts of Christianity regulate the affections, strengthen the bonds of society, and inculcate the most sublime virtue ‡. Let it, therefore, be deeply impressed on all your hearts, that the design of the Christian religion is to promote purity of mind, and sanctity of life; and that immoral

* Tit. ii. 11—14. Eph. iv. 17—21.

† Acts xxiv. 24, 25.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 5—8. 1 Pet. i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 22. James ii. 17.

prac-

practices are incompatible with, and destructive of, the important end, for which it was revealed *.

In the third place, You cannot be too often reminded, that, as Christianity has given us the animating prospect of that future and higher state of existence, towards which we are advancing, as it has established the certainty of what, to the Pagan world could only be matter of great probability, let us endeavour to sustain our present trials with pious fortitude, and study to be conducted by the "light" of the Gospel, through this short, but unspeakably important period of our existence, to the kingdom of everlasting peace. We believe, that death is not a total extinction of our being, but a change of existence; to the righteous, it is a removal to another and better state, "where the "wicked shall cease from troubling, and the "weary be at rest †."—Let us improve, therefore, our intellectual and moral nature, and thereby qualify ourselves for the happiness of a future world. Whatever is our station, whatever

* 2 Tim. ii. 19. Eph. iv. 1—3. Rom. i. 18.
† Job iii. 17.

may be the blessings and comforts we enjoy, or the calamities to which we are exposed, let us confide in the Providence of God, and rest assured, that all his dispensations, if enjoyed with gratitude, or endured with Christian resignation, will terminate in our future and endless felicity *.

Animated, then, by the glorious hope of immortality, which the Christian religion is so peculiarly calculated to inspire, let us attend to the duties of our station, and look forwards to that happy period, when the veil, which now separates us from the future world, shall be withdrawn, and we shall partake of that "fulness of joy †," which is in God's presence for evermore; when the pious, the benevolent, and the virtuous, in every age, rank, and condition, shall meet in a better world, and for ever associate with the blessed society of angels, "and the spirits of just men made perfect ‡;" when, instead of a temporal and mutable existence, we shall enjoy an eternal and heavenly state §; when war, and tumult, and discord, shall for ever cease; and peace, and benevo-

* 1 Cor. xv. 58. Gal. vi. 9. † Psal. xvi. 11.
‡ Heb. xii. 22, 23. § 1 Cor. xv. 49. 2 Cor. v. 1.

lence,

lence, and joy, shall actuate every breast; and when we shall be no longer exposed to the influence of criminal passions, but shall, in some degree, resemble God in his moral perfections, in his holiness, his justice, his goodness, and his truth. —But, never let it be forgotten, as a matter of the most serious consideration, and awful consequence, that "he, who hath this" blessed "hope, should purify himself, even as God is "pure *."

The conclusion I would draw from all this is momentous beyond expression, and cannot be impressed so strongly as in the energetic words of an Apostle: "If we say that we have fel- "lowship with him, and walk in *darkness*, we "lie, and do not the truth: but, if we walk in "the *light*, as he is in the light," then "we "have fellowship with each other, and the "blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us "from all sin †."

* 1 John iii. 3. Heb. xii. 14. † 1 John i. 6, 7.

THE THREE following DISCOURSES are designed to be a further elucidation of the Christian temper, and a delineation of the doctrines, the principles, and the duties of our Holy Religion. They were originally printed for the use of the Author's Parishioners—and only the substance of them delivered from the pulpit, at an Anniversary Meeting of two Friendly Societies of poor tradesmen and day-labourers at Sunbury, instituted for their mutual support in cases of sickness, accident, or old age.

THE THIRD EDITION, ENLARGED.

SERMON X.

PHILIPPIANS, i. 27.

Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

THE Gospel of Christ has produced a very wonderful and beneficial change in the condition and sentiments of every nation, where its sacred truths have been received. It has given, as we have seen, the most sublime views of God and his Providence, of human nature, and of a future state. It has made known what we are to believe concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the stupendous work of man's redemption. It has revealed this momentous

mentous truth, that "eternal life is the gift of "God, through Jesus Christ our Lord *." It has exhibited the most astonishing display of the Divine goodness, in raising a whole race of intelligent beings from a state of ignorance and vice †, and in conducting them, if it be not their own fault, through a scene of trial and moral discipline, to the highest degree of improvement and felicity, of which their nature is susceptible. To this great end, it has taught us, in the plainest manner, the important duties we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves ‡. It has commanded us to love and fear God §, to worship and serve him with a pure and pious heart ‖; to cultivate justice and benevolence to our neighbours; and sobriety and temperance with regard to ourselves. It has impressed this awful truth, that the disposition of the mind is what God principally regards; and it has informed us, that his Holy Spirit will influence our minds, and co-operate with our sincere endeavours in

* Rom. vi. 23.

† Rom. iii. 23. Gen. vi. 5. 12. Psal. xiv. 3. Job xv. 14—16. Jerem. xvii. 9. Eccles. vii. 20. 1 John v. 19. 1 John i. 8. 10. Rom. v. 12; vii. 18—24. Eph. ii. 1—3.

‡ Micah vi. 8. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

§ Deut. x. 12, 13. 20, 21. Mark xii. 28—34.

‖ 1 Tim. i. 5. Psal. xxiv. 3—5.

the

the discharge of our duty, and in enabling us to act according to the great principles of our religion. It has shewn us the efficacy of repentance, and on what terms we may obtain the remission of sins. It has also given us some important discoveries of the condition of good and bad men in a future state, and it points out the intimate relation which this life bears to the next. In a word, the Gospel records the birth, the life, the miracles, the death, and the resurrection,—the doctrines and the precepts, of the Son of God; and it contains that Divine system of religion revealed in the New Testament, which has been, and, we doubt not, will continue to be, the means of bestowing virtue and happiness on millions of our fellow-creatures.

These are some of the leading *doctrines* of Christianity, which have a tendency to increase every real and genuine enjoyment of prosperity, and can hardly fail to animate the virtuous heart, and to support it amidst the various afflictions incident to human nature. And, in endeavouring to illustrate the exhortation of the Apostle, and in pointing out the influence which these doctrines should produce on the mind and conduct, we shall have occasion to take notice of,

of, and inculcate some of the benevolent *precepts* which it enjoins.

The text requires that you should be actuated in your personal deportment, and in your intercourse with society, by the precepts and laws of Christianity; it enjoins you to maintain a temper and conduct agreeable to its sacred dictates, and necessarily directs us to the consideration of its *practical* truths. "Only let your conversa-"tion be as becometh the Gospel of Christ *."

Now,

* *Only behave worthy of the Gospel of Christ.* Πολιτευεσθε literally denotes, that ye behave as denizens, or freemen of some city or civil polity. The expression is evidently borrowed from the conduct of good citizens, who act suitably to the laws and customs of the community of which they are members. The same expression occurs, ch. iii. 20. Ἡμων γαρ το ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΑ εν ουρανοις υπαρχει. The meaning of which will be best understood, by comparing it with what the Apostle says in the preceding verse, where he speaks of those who spend their lives merely in sensual gratifications, and only "mind earthly things." But, as Christians, "*our* conversation," says he, Ἡμων το πολιτευμα, "is in Heaven." Our thoughts and affections, our hopes and desires, are all directed to the attainment of future happiness. In our sentiments, in our actions, and in our "conversation," we are governed by the Heavenly principles and laws of our religion. While we conduct ourselves as inhabitants of this earth, and endeavour to be good and useful members of civil society, we recollect that we are immortal beings, subjects of the moral government of God, and hope, by

Now, to explain and recommend this duty, which, in the judgment of the Apostle, appeared so reasonable and important, I shall, first, consider what ought to be the rule of your conduct towards mankind in general: secondly, what particular duties the Gospel requires of men who live in the same city or neighbourhood: thirdly, how you ought to behave towards those who differ from you in religious opinions: fourthly, how you should conduct yourselves in your respective families: and, lastly, I shall point out those duties which you owe to each other, as members of the same Society, and shall state how its interests may be best promoted.

These are topics of the greatest importance, highly necessary to be enforced in times, wherein the benefits arising from society seem not sufficiently attended to; and therefore, in discussing them, and in shewing their influence on your behaviour and "conversation," your pa-

by the discoveries and mercies which result from Christianity, to be at last admitted into the society of the blessed above—"*the "city of the living God.*" Heb. xii. 22; and xiii. 14. So that the text, thus far explained, opens a wide field of duty and enquiry: *Only behave as becomes those to whom the Gospel of Christ is revealed.*

tience

tience and attention must be particularly entreated.—Let us, then,

I. Consider the principles of the Gospel with regard to mankind in general. Man is a social being; the instinct of his nature impels him to apply to his fellow-creatures for protection and security, and for the endearments of friendly intercourse. Our wants, and our wishes, shew that we are connected by the sacred tie of humanity *. This law is so deeply impressed on our minds by the hand of our Creator, that we must stifle the finest feelings of nature, if we allow ourselves to cherish animosity or envy, and to disregard justice and charity. Destitute of the comforts of society, and deprived of all intercourse of sentiment, what miserable and forlorn creatures should we be! Accustomed to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty, our condition would be far more wretched, than if we had never known the pleasures of social life, or the advantages of regular government. By society, however, and by the influence of Christianity, the ferocity of human nature is diminished, and even the horrors of

* Acts xvii. 26; and xxviii. 1, 2,

war

war, and the rage of persecution, are mitigated. The manners and the laws of mankind are evidently softened and improved; and we can trace a gradual advancement in civilization *, in virtue, and in religion. When the Gospel was first published, servants were slaves; but, where the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity prevails, slavery is unknown, servitude so much softened, and the human heart so far enlarged, that no one can *now* be at a loss to know, "who is his neighbour †." We all know that we have one common nature, and that every man is to be considered as our neighbour, whom we are able to assist. By acts of kindness, and by our endeavours to suppress vice and misery, and to diffuse virtue and happiness among mankind, we resemble the greatest and the best of Beings; and, according to our abilities, become "merciful, as our Father, who is in heaven, is

* If it should be thought, that this is hardly applicable to the condition of such societies as consist of poor tradesmen and day-labourers, let it be remarked, that several of the author's hearers are friends and promoters of these excellent institutions; and that their education, their manners, and their habits, are so many proofs of the principles here adduced.

† See the Parable of the humane Samaritan, Luke x. 25—37.

" merciful *."—Such is the general principle of benevolence, which evinces that man is designed by his Maker for society, and should maintain a mutual intercourse of good offices, in order that his " conversation may be as becometh the " Gospel of Christ."—Let us,

II. Consider those particular duties which Christianity requires of men who live in the same city or neighbourhood. Now, the law of humanity, which, you see, extends to the whole human race, will be found to operate more powerfully, when applied to those who are united into one community, and associate for mutual comfort and protection. Though Christianity requires us to venerate the rights, and to feel for the sufferings, of all our fellow-creatures, yet it enjoins a particular attachment to the welfare and interest of those, with whom we are most intimately connected, either by kindred, by friendship, or by neighbourhood. Instead of confounding order and subordination, it clearly ascertains the rights of every individual †. In every station and occupation of life, from the king on the throne to the peasant in the field,

* Luke vi. 36. † Rom. xiii. 1—9.

there

there are certain obvious duties enjoined by our religion; and happy would it be for every rank and condition of men, if they more commonly produced their genuine effects! In our transactions with each other, the doctrines of Christianity teach us to guard against injustice, violence, and fraud, and to cultivate veracity, probity, and benevolence. Men, in the higher ranks of society, should relieve distress, encourage industry, and promote virtue and religion *. On the other hand, those who are placed by Providence in the lower stations of life, should be honest, industrious, and orderly †. All should be candid, peaceable, and "kindly-"affectioned one towards another ‡." By the exertion of our bodily strength, or by the energy of our minds, we should all endeavour to diffuse social happiness, and should never forget, whatever may be our circumstances in life, That we are fellow-creatures, liable to the same wants and infirmities, children of the same Heavenly

* 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. Psal. lxxxii. 1—4. Jer. xxii. 3. Levit. xix. 15.

† Eph. iv. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 13—18. Tit. iii. 1, 2. Prov. xxiii. 21. 1 Tim. v. 8.

‡ Rom. xii. 10.

Father, and, through his mercy in Christ Jesus, candidates for the same state of eternal felicity.

In your intercourse with society, you should particularly attend to that evangelical law, which cannot be too deeply engraved on your hearts, and—"*do to others as you would have them do to you**." For, if men were always actuated by this great and general rule of Christianity, which is so important, and so easily understood, they would never violate the peace of society, nor bring on themselves the reproach of injustice or inhumanity. On the contrary, they would feel that the first duty which they owe to others, is to do them no harm; and the next, to do them all the good they are able. Many imagine, because they are in indigent circumstances, that they have it not in their power to be charitable. But this is a mistake. In the daily commerce of life, you have frequent opportunities of doing good to your neighbour: you may speak well of him; you may vindicate his character if it has been unjustly defamed; you may give him friendly advice; you may comfort him in his afflictions; or, you may visit and assist him in sickness and distress. Surely all these are charitable acts; and the

* Luke vi. 31.

poorest,

poorest, as well as the most opulent among us; cannot say that he is incapable of performing them. Wherever there is a real benevolence of temper, various methods will daily suggest themselves to you of being useful to each other; and, by this benignity of heart, by this inclination to oblige, you will give the most unequivocal proof of your religious sincerity: "By "this shall all men know that ye are Christ's "disciples, if ye have love one to another *." But among neighbours, and among men professing Christianity, this kind assistance is frequently withheld through envy, through hatred, through a selfish or contracted temper; and men foster those malignant passions, from which infinite mischief continually arises.—Let me, therefore, intreat you to avoid contention, to cherish an habitual tenderness and generosity of mind, and to shew, by your conduct and "conversation," that you are animated by that spirit of forgiveness † and benevolence, which breathes in every page of the Gospel. You will thereby be good neighbours, and contribute your endeavours to soothe the afflictions of hu-

* John xiii. 35.

† Matth. v. 43—48; vi. 14, 15; and xviii. 21—35.

man life. God knows, the afflictions of life fall heavy upon all; and it is our interest, no less than our duty, to alleviate them as much as possible. And, if envy and strife, if ill-nature and detraction, if pride and discontent, were banished from the heart, some of the greatest calamities which men undergo, would be removed. For, human misery proceeds, not so much from (what we call) the events of fortune, or the pains of the body, as from disordered hearts, perverted opinions, and turbulent or ill-directed passions.—Let us,

III. Consider how you ought to behave towards those who differ from you in religious opinions. In this imperfect state, where mankind possess different degrees of knowledge and capacity, it is vain to expect an uniformity of sentiment. Nor does religion require it: while men do not propagate principles subversive of virtue and of peace, and repugnant to those eternal laws, which are imprinted on our minds by the great Author of order and of excellence, every man has an unalienable right to follow his own judgment, and, with candour and charity, to use those faculties for acquiring knowledge and truth, which Providence has bestowed on him.

If

If we claim and exercise this valuable privilege ourselves, we ought not to refuse it to others.—Remember then, that no differences in religious tenets should ever be the cause of intolerance, should ever produce a spirit of persecution, or should ever hinder you from treating other denominations of Christians with candour and forbearance*. Remember further, that violent disputes about religion would be peculiarly improper among men who have not had the advantages of learning, and are, therefore, not so able to investigate some of the great truths, which the Gospel has revealed.

If perfect harmony in religious sentiments be not now attainable, "Let brotherly love continue†." "What we know not now, we shall "know hereafter‡." In this world, our knowledge of Divine truths is limited and imperfect. But, in a future state, our ignorance will be gradually removed; the powers and faculties of the human mind will be enlarged and improved; and good men will probably be making continual progression in benevolence, virtue, and knowledge.—Let this consciousness of in-

* Luke ix. 51—56. † Heb. xiii. 1.
‡ John xiii. 7. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

tellectual weakness, and this consoling hope of a higher state of existence, teach us to avoid all malignant and narrow-minded contentions, and induce us to let mutual forbearance and Christian charity form our temper, and govern our conduct.

Here it may be observed, that even in the Apostolic age, an age distinguished for its charity, there was not a perfect uniformity among Christians in all matters of religion *; yet, it deserves our particular attention that, though they were not wholly without diversity of opinion, it did not produce any malignity of heart, any alienation of affection, any uncharitable judgment. On the contrary, they continued to live in perfect harmony, and in full communion with one another †.—Guard, then, against all party-rancour, which tends only to infuse bigotry, to sour the temper, and to alienate the affections of Christians from one another; and be thankful, that you live in an age, when the rights of human nature are better known and maintained, and in a country where every man is allowed the free and unmolested profession of

* Acts xv. 1, 2. 6—29. Rom. xiv.

† Acts ii. 44—47.

his

his religion, according to the dictates of his conscience. Happy had it been for mankind, if this moderation had always subsisted in the Christian church; if the doctrines of our religion had been allowed to make their way by the native energy of truth; and if all who had professed Christianity, had regulated their temper and "conversation" according to its liberal and benevolent principles! We are exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith *; but, let it ever be in the spirit of meekness, and of Christian charity; for passion and intolerance, so far from advancing the cause of true religion, tend only to obstruct and disgrace it.

I should now proceed to consider how we ought to behave in our respective families, how the principles of the Gospel will operate in the regulation of our tempers, and of our domestic concerns. But, as this is a most interesting subject, and of great extent, I shall reserve the consideration of it, with some reflections on education, till another opportunity.

* Jude v. 3.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

PHILIPPIANS, i. 27.

Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

WE have already stated the leading doctrines of Christianity; and, in endeavouring to illustrate the Apostle's exhortation in the text, we have also considered what ought to be the rule of our conduct towards mankind in general;—what particular duties the Gospel requires of men who live in the same city or neighbourhood;—and how we ought to behave towards those who differ from us in religious opinions.—Let us now,

IV. Con-

IV. Consider how we should behave in our respective families, how the principles of the Gospel will operate in the regulation of our tempers, and of our domestic concerns. To this subject you should pay the greater attention, as many, who are regular in their profession of religion at church, are shamefully remiss in the duties of private life. Now, the first duty of every head of a family is, to promote a sense of religion in his own house *. Family-prayer has a tendency to maintain a spirit of devotion, to repress animosities, to increase benevolence, and to improve our virtue. And, as so many good consequences result from it, you should not fail to make it a part of your daily employment. If you allow the business of life to engage your whole attention; if it prevent you from devoting a small portion of your time, every day, in devout prayer to God †; a period is fast approaching when you will acknowledge, with the greatest regret, that you were too deeply engaged in the pursuits of this world, and too inattentive to the concerns of the next.—"O come," then,

* Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. vi. 7. Psal. l. 14, 15. Matth. xviii. 20. Col. iv. 2. Jude 20, 21.

† Psal. v. 3.

"let

"let us worship and bow down, and kneel be-
"fore the Lord our Maker. Worship him in
"the beauty of holiness *." Cultivate that elevation of mind, that reverence of Almighty God, that purity of heart, and that integrity of life, which will shew the sincerity of your religious principles, that you are promoting the cause of piety and virtue, and that your behaviour is "such as becometh the Gospel of Christ."

A second duty, to which, as Christians, you must particularly attend, is industry †. Man was never designed to be inactive: some are destined to procure their daily subsistence by the labour of their hands ‡; and others, by the exertion of their minds. All are to be employed in some virtuous and useful occupation, suitable to their station and abilities. You are enjoined in Scripture "to be quiet, and to do your own "business, and to work with your own hands §," at your respective employments. And, in another place, the Apostle expresses himself in still stronger language: "If any will not work,

* Psal. xcv. 6; and xcvi. 9.

† Prov. xxiii. 21; vi. 6—11; and xxiv. 30—32. Eccles. ix. 10.

‡ Gen. iii. 19.

§ 1 Thess. iv. 11.

"neither

"neither should he eat *," and thereby become a burden on the industry of others. Now, if any of *you* were to neglect your business, and to spend your time in idleness or vice, the consequence would be very fatal to yourselves, and to your families †. I need not, therefore, expatiate on the ignominy and degradation of applying for parochial relief without absolute necessity, nor point out to you, how mean and sordid it is in men to live on the property and industry of others, when, by diligence and prudence, they might have supported themselves, and avoided all the misery and humiliation of a parish-maintenance. As long as you are industrious, and attentive to the duties of your station, you will be respected; and, remember, while you are thus employed, you are fulfilling the wise purposes of Providence, and are promoting your eternal interests, even while you seem wholly engaged about the concerns of the present life ‡.

A duty, nearly connected with industry, and highly consistent with your Christian principles,

* 2 Thess. iii. 10. † 1 Tim. v. 8, 13.
‡ Rom. xii. 11.

is

is frugality. Unless men pay attention to the management of their domestic concerns, they must inevitably fall into disorder. And, as this will be found to be true, even in the superior ranks of life, surely those, whom I am now particularly addressing, must be sensible, that, without some prudence and care, *they* may soon be involved in embarrassments and expences, from which it would be almost impossible to extricate themselves. Many of the poor are extremely improvident in the management of their slender property, and aggravate their afflictions by their want of œconomy and foresight when they are young, and have not a family to support. Instead of making any provision against accidental difficulties, they meanly depend upon parish-maintenance, and unthinkingly squander in health, what might have supported them with comfort in sickness, or in age. —But others, by virtuous industry, and by becoming members of Friendly Societies, shew an independence of sentiment, and a principle of benevolence, which you should ever retain. Their prudence, indeed, and their foresight, cannot be too highly commended, for laying by a portion, at stated times, as Providence has blessed

blessed their exertions *; and for appropriating part of their wages for their mutual support in cases of accident or of illness, somewhat resembling the custom which prevailed among the primitive Christians, of "assisting *their* poor "brethren, and distributing to every man ac- "cording as his necessities required †." By this means, if they happen, at any time, to be disabled by disease, or bowed down with the infirmities of Nature, they can apply to their Society for relief, and will be supported by a fund, which their own industry and œconomy have contributed to raise ‡.

That your moral and religious conduct may be "suitable to the Gospel," there is another domestic virtue which must not be omitted, and that is temperance. The great number of public-

* 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Acts xi. 29, 30.

† Acts iv. 32—35.

‡ It were much to be wished, that those, who are in the lower ranks of life, would all follow the same example in the season of youth, and become members of Amicable Societies, formed for such useful purposes. If these benevolent institutions could be made general, they would render parochial relief unnecessary; and would furnish a far more comfortable, and more honourable, support for the poor, than the present legal provision. This is strikingly evinced in the following Essay.

houses,

houses, and the disorderly manner in which many of them are kept, are no less detrimental to society, than destructive to religion *. But, if you have any regard to decency and character; if you have any affection for your families, who naturally look up to you for protection and support; you will not quit the paths of sobriety and peace, and leave them a helpless prey to misery and want. By intemperance and excess, you impair your health and your understanding, you waste your time and your substance, you ruin your families, and injure your morals. Drunkenness is incompatible with a Christian life and "conversation;" it is repugnant to that self-government and purity, which the Gospel requires you to cultivate, and is expressly mentioned among those vices, which will exclude you "from the kingdom of God †." Against a habit, then, so pernicious to your happiness, both here and hereafter, you can never be sufficiently guarded ‡.—Avoid, therefore, as far as possible, the society and "conversation" of the idle, the profligate, and the

* Prov. xxiii. 29—33. Psal. v. 11, 12.

† Gal. v. 21.

‡ Luke xii. 45, 46; xxi. 34—36. Rom. xiii. 12—14. 1 Cor. x. 31.

O drunken;

drunken *; and associate with the industrious, the virtuous, and the sober.

There is one duty more, deserving particular attention, which remains to be mentioned here; it is, that of promoting mutual affection, and gentleness of manners, in our respective families. Of the sad effects of quarrels and dissensions in private life, we have many melancholy proofs. In the very first age of the world, and among Adam's own sons, we have an awful instance of the dreadful consequence of variance and strife among relations. We find, that Cain entirely stifled his affection for his brother Abel; allowed the rancour of hatred and envy to take full possession of his heart; and at last, with impious hands, became his assassin †.—When those, who are connected by the nearest and dearest ties of Nature, once acquire the habit of wrangling and disputing, all their domestic comforts are at an end, their tempers become soured, their peace of mind is ruined;—and thus, by their conduct and "conversation," they too evidently

* 1 Cor. xv. 33.
† Gen. iv. 2—8. 1 John iii. 12.

shew,

shew, that they are *not* "acting as becometh "the Gospel of Christ."

It was, therefore, the observation of the wise man, "Better is a dinner of herbs, where love "is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith *." The most scanty or the most homely fare, accompanied with domestic harmony and peace, and with the love of God and virtue, is far more delicious to the taste, and more pleasing to the mind, than the most splendid entertainment, imbittered by discord and strife, by profaneness and vice. You cannot, then, be too careful to regulate your tempers; to promote social affection, good humour, and cheerfulness of "con-"versation" in your families; and to instil the same Christian principles into the minds of your children.—This leads me to some reflections on their education, with a view that *they* may "be-"have as becometh the Gospel."

Among some weak and ill-informed minds an opinion has prevailed, that the lower orders of society should be kept in ignorance, and should not enjoy the benefit of education. The reason they assign is this: The poor, by education,

* Prov. xv. 17.

become turbulent and inattentive to their business, and make a bad use of their knowledge. Now, admitting this to be sometimes the case (for it is too obvious to be always denied), it only shews, that the greatest blessings are liable to be abused, and to be perverted to the worst purposes; but, on account of the abuse, it would be absurd to renounce the use of what is good, or to argue against every improvement in science, in morals, and in religion. The truth is, it is not owing to Christianity, but to the want of it, that such grounds of complaint do arise. For, wherever a diffusion of true Christian knowledge has taken place, wherever its genuine principles are inculcated and received, there men will be sober, honest, industrious, peaceable, contented, and pious. But, when its duties are neglected, its sanctions unknown, and its obligations disregarded, then every principle, hostile to the peace, the interests, and the happiness of society, will be disseminated.

This shews you the importance of religious education, and the utility of Sunday-schools. Of the utility, indeed, of these excellent institutions I have so often spoken, and you now seem so fully convinced, that it will be unnecessary

cessary for me to say much in their behalf. Among other advantages, you see that your children are thereby rescued from ignorance and depravity, are instructed in the great and fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, and acquire settled habits of piety and virtue. They are accustomed to spend the Sunday in a proper manner, and are taught the most sublime truths; —the necessity of "living soberly, righteously, "and godly *," in this world, that they may be useful members of society, and may make this life a passage to a better. You know, also, that they are at the most dangerous and critical period, when their minds are ready to receive any impression, and when their future conduct and happiness will, in a great measure, depend on the habits they now acquire. If pains be taken to train them up in the paths of innocence, virtue, and religion, there is every reason to hope that, in mature age, they will not depart from them †. But if they be once habituated to vice, and their "conversation" be contrary to the principles of the Gospel, they, probably, will never abandon those pernicious practices ‡, but, by profligacy and wickedness, will bring down

* Tit. ii. 12. † Prov. xxii. 6. ‡ Jer. xiii. 23.

your "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave *." To guard against consequences which are so fatal, you should continue to send your children regularly to the Sunday-schools, and should be thankful for the advantages thence derived—advantages which *you* did not enjoy at the same period of your own lives †.

In young minds, there is generally a candour, a modesty, a love of truth, a docility, which shews how peculiarly proper it is to inculcate good principles in early life ‡, and to instil such sentiments, as are calculated to influence and regulate their future conduct. And, as youth is the best season for the cultivation of devout and virtuous habits, it is of the utmost importance, that the good impressions, which have been imbibed, may never be effaced.

* Gen. xlii. 38.

† It is only doing justice to the Author's Parishioners to mention, that, from the highest down to those who receive benefit from the Sunday-schools, there is hardly an individual, who does not subscribe cheerfully and liberally to their support. And it is with singular pleasure he is enabled to add, that, at present, they are in a very flourishing condition, and that their utility begins every day to be more sensibly felt. They require, however, constant attention, and a degree of prudence in their management, far greater than is generally imagined.

‡ Mark x. 13—16.

From

From a sense of piety to God, once infused by a proper education, will gradually arise that holy temper of mind, that uniform benevolence and innocence of life, that gentleness of behaviour, that self-government, and that love and obedience to parents, which reason and religion concur to recommend and enforce.

With this view, you should restrain in your children every violent passion, and every propensity to ill-nature, slander, and malevolence; and you should pay great attention to their health and cleanliness, and to their natural dispositions, as they advance in life.—Let it here be remarked, that a due regard to cleanliness is attended with more important and beneficial consequences, than at first may be imagined. The state of the body is, in general, a true indication of the state of the mind. Rags and filth are the usual symptoms of idleness, improvidence, and vice: whereas, habitual cleanliness not only contributes to health, but leads to that sanctity of heart, and to that purity of manners, which prepare men for a higher state of existence.

Often, then, consider the important duties, which you owe to your children; and remember that, when the seeds of impiety and vice

are once allowed to grow in tender minds, they are not easily eradicated. Natural affection is deeply rooted in the human heart. The great Author of Nature has wisely implanted in the breasts of men, for the most benevolent purposes, those endearing affections, which lead them to protect and educate their offspring, to form their opinions, to regulate their tempers, to influence their manners, to improve their morals, and thereby to promote the felicity of mankind.—Let me beseech you, therefore, to watch over your children with solicitous attention, and to be studious to preserve them from evil. Teach them to be sober, chaste, and honest; to be attentive to their promises and engagements, and content with their station. Inspire them with a detestation of lying, artifice, and theft; and train them up, by gentle discipline, to the early habits of cheerful industry, and to the regular practice of every social and moral obligation. But, above all, endeavour to impress on their young and docile minds a deep sense of Religion, and of the duties they owe to their God and Saviour. Often remind them, that, though their earthly master may be absent, yet they are under the constant inspection of

their

their *Heavenly* Master, to whom we are all accountable *.

These are very essential duties, which you should not fail to inculcate as far as you are able; and if some of you can give but little instruction in the way of precept, you can all be useful in a still higher degree—*by setting them a good example.* This is a duty peculiarly incumbent on every one who stands in the important and endearing relation of a parent. I must particularly admonish you, then, to govern your passions, and tempers; and to let your general "conversation," and your whole deportment, correspond with the principles of the religion which you profess. If you endeavour to give them good advice, and a good example, you have little else to bequeath to them. Nor do they want more: while they enjoy the blessing of health, they can always maintain themselves by their personal labour: and, if unavoidable afflictions befal them, they will, no doubt, meet with assistance and relief from the charitable and well-disposed. You have, therefore, no reason to be solicitous about them after they are grown up; in this respect you enjoy an advan-

* Prov. xv. 3. Psal. cxxix. 1—12. Col. iii. 22—24.

tage

tage over the higher classes of society—over those whom you are apt to envy, and to think so happy. *They* have often great anxiety about their children; they are not always able to give them a fortune suited to their rank and expectations, nor can they easily determine what profession to choose for them. Now, this is a perplexity from which *you* are exempted. Providence dispenses happiness among the human race with a far more equal hand, than a superficial observer is willing to allow. By the simplicity of your lives, and the tranquillity of your habitations, you enjoy that health of body, and that serenity of mind, frequently unknown to the opulent and the great. You live in obscurity; but if you have food and raiment, if you live in peace and security, and enjoy the blessings of religious truth, and of a good conscience; these surely are great and valuable enjoyments, and you ought not to be discontented. So that, when you think of the comforts you want, you should reflect also on the anxieties and temptations from which you are free, and on the blessings, both civil and religious, which you enjoy. If you are attentive to the duties of your humble, but important, station; if you keep in view the great design of your existence here,

here, and take care that your children do not acquire bad habits, you will, in the decline of life, derive unspeakable consolation in reflecting, that you used your best endeavours to regulate their passions, and to form their minds to piety and virtue; and, when the solemn period of your dissolution draweth nigh, "this "will be your rejoicing—The testimony of your "consciences, that, in simplicity and godly sin-"cerity, not with carnal wisdom, but with the "grace of God, you have had your conversa-"tion in the world *." You will then be supported by God's presence, at a season most awful to human nature, and may commit your offspring to the care of that gracious Providence, who hath said, "Leave thy fatherless children, "I will preserve them alive; and let thy wi-"dows trust in me †."

* 2 Cor. i. 12. † Jer. xlix. 11.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

PHILIPPIANS, i. 27.

Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

HAVING considered at some length, in the former discourse, the duties which we owe in our respective families, and having particularly dwelt on the necessity of attending to the education and behaviour of children—a topic so important in its nature, and which might be made so beneficial in its consequences,—I now proceed, in the last place,

V. To

V. To point out those duties we owe to one another as members of the same Society, and to shew how its interests may be best promoted. This is partly anticipated by what has been already advanced; I shall, however, suggest a few general observations, which, if attended to, may be useful to you.

The Psalmist felt much pleasure in seeing men live in amity and peace. "Behold," says he, "how good and pleasant it is for brethren "to dwell together in unity*." It diffuses a spirit of benevolence through all ranks, and unites them in one bond of mutual interest, and of social affection. You will, therefore, at all times, study to live in harmony and peace with your neighbours, cultivating a benevolent disposition towards all, and endeavouring to disseminate it among others. Were mankind always guided in their conduct and "conversa-"tion" by the heavenly principles and motives of the Gospel, what a change would take place in the world! "Nation would no longer lift "up their sword against nation, neither would

* Psal. cxxxiii. 1.

"they

"they learn war any more*." No disease would be brought on through intemperance and irregular passions. No turbulent spirit would attempt to interrupt the peace of society, or to invade the rights of individuals. All the animosities, which are occasioned by the jarring interests of men, would be suppressed; cheerfulness and contentment would animate every breast†.

But this, alas! is far from being the present state of society; and, therefore, I cannot too earnestly guard you against those bitter animosities and civil dissensions, which so unhappily prevail. Without laws and subordination no society, whatever may be its particular form, can long subsist. While the laws, or standing rules, of any community are revered and obeyed, its affairs will prosper; but, when they are despised and subverted, its interests will be neglected, and confusion will inevitably ensue. Among nations, tumult and faction always lead to rapine and violence, to anarchy, and every species of outrage: and many a rich and flourishing society has been entirely ruined, when the spirit of discord and variance has once prevailed

* Isa. ii. 4. † James iii. 13—18.

among

among the members. Where strife and dissension are introduced, "there," says St. James, "is confusion, and every evil work *." The benevolent Friend of man has, therefore, particularly warned us against civil commotions and intestine divisions. "Every kingdom, di-"vided against itself, is brought to desolation; "and every city or house, divided against it-"self, cannot stand †."

Of the truth of this divine remark, examples might be given from the history of every nation that has existed in the world; but, without adverting to the records of antiquity, the proceedings of our own society will sufficiently evince its importance. When harmony and regularity subsist among us; when our behaviour is always influenced by the principles, and regulated by the laws, of Christianity; we may humbly hope for that blessing of Heaven, that "*peace of God* ‡," which can alone secure our social happiness, and domestic tranquillity. —Earnestly, therefore, implore his sacred influence to enable us to act, at all times, as "becometh the Gospel;" and let me exhort

* James iii. 16. † Matth. xii. 25.
‡ Philip. iv. 7.

you,

you, in the words of the Apostle, and by the name of our Divine Master, to endeavour, as a society of men and of Christians, to promote mutual forbearance and good-humour, and to avoid quarrels and contentions. "I beseech "you, brethren, by the name of our Lord "Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same "thing, and that there be no divisions among "you; but that ye be perfectly united in the "same mind, and in the same judgment*." By this mutual love of order and peace, by this social affection, and general good conduct, you will distinguish yourselves from men of unchristian principles, and will shew, that all your works, and all your views, are directed to the glory of God, the improvement of your nature, and the happiness of society.

Such, then, is a brief view of the nature, the tendency, and the spirit, of the Gospel of Christ. Much more might be added, to display the sublimity of its doctrines, and the purity of its laws. And, in every view in which it can be considered, it must appear so admirably adapted to our nature and infirmities, so

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

congenial to the human mind, and so conducive to our happiness, that, if we attend to its peculiar excellence and evidences, we cannot but be convinced of its Divine origin, and be deeply impressed with gratitude to the Author of such a merciful dispensation *.

And now, my brethren, on a review of all that has been said,—Consider what effect this religion has on your temper and conduct. It is by attention to these great duties and principles, amidst the various occupations of active and laborious life, that you shew your "conversation" to be "such as becometh the Gospel of Christ." Professing yourselves, then, to be Christians, solemnly ask yourselves,—have your thoughts, your words, and your actions, been regulated by Christianity? Owning yourselves candidates for another and higher state of existence, have your religious principles had an habitual influence on your hearts and lives? Have they led you, in every condition of life, to act conscientiously, and to avoid those vices, to which, from your situation, and natural temper, you have been pecu-

* Eph. i. 3—7.

liarly

liarly exposed? Can you say, that you have revered and loved the God who made you *, and the Saviour who redeemed you †; that you have cherished benevolent affections towards all mankind without exception; and that you have "kept yourselves unspotted from the "world ‡?" Have you considered the important purpose for which you were created, and endeavoured to improve your moral nature? Conscious, as all of us must be, of numberless errors and imperfections, have your hopes of future happiness been founded on that mercy, which is most eminently displayed in the Gospel-dispensation? Have you prayed earnestly, that the blessed influence of Divine Grace may enlighten your understandings §, sanctify your hearts ||, and enable you to improve in piety, in benevolence, in humility ¶, and in all the other graces of the Christian character? Have you shewn your parental affection, by guarding your children against vicious habits, and by using your best endeavours to have them instructed in the momentous doctrines and duties

* Mark xii. 30. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. Tit. ii. 14.
‡ James i. 27. § 2 Cor. iv. 6; and iii. 18.
|| 1 Pet. i. 2.
¶ Luke xiv. 7—18; and xviii. 9—14.

of the Christian religion? Have you frequently reflected, that we are now in a state of probation for eternity; that God will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked*; and that the future destination of all good men will be—"to glory, honour, and immortality†?" Have you often considered, that your inward temper, as well as your outward conduct, that every action of your lives, as well as every thought that is harboured in your breasts, will be scrutinized by our great and impartial Judge? And, in fine, amidst all the trials and afflictions of the world, have you been resigned to the dispensations of Providence, thankful that you are capable of moral improvement, and that "every event will," ultimately, "work together for your good‡."

What answers some of *you* can give to enquiries of this sort, God and your own consciences know best. But, alas! we can too easily judge of many by their neglect of devotion, and of moral duties. When we consider the Gospel, as it is delineated in the New Testa-

* Matth. xiii. 49, 50; and xxv. 46.
† Rom. ii. 7. ‡ Rom. viii. 28.

ment,

ment, and compare it with the lives of many, who call themselves Christians, we are struck with the amazing contrast, and can hardly perceive any resemblance between them. The pleasures and the riches of the world on the one hand, and its business and anxieties on the other, often prevent men from paying that attention to the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, which its infinite importance deserves.

In opposition to this conduct, let me remind you, that you are immortal beings. Six days you are allowed and enjoined to labour, and to procure an honest subsistence for yourselves and families. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; he hath appropriated it to religious purposes, and hath forbidden us to spend it in worldly pursuits *. You should, therefore, go regularly to the house of God for the exercise of devotion, and attend, with steady and unbiassed minds, to the religious instruction delivered from the pulpit †. All should then be engaged in the public worship of Almighty God; all should be employed in

* Gen. ii. 1—3. Exod. xvi. 22—30; xx. 8—11; and xxxi. 12—17. Matth. xii. 1—8.

† Deut. xxxi, 9—13. Psal. v. 7; and xxvi. 6—8.

imploring his mercy and protection. Trifling excuses should never be permitted to interfere with the important duty of social piety *; and, if you are occasionally prevented from going to church, you should be the more anxious to give your attendance at other times. By this means you will still maintain a sense of religion on your minds, and be sensible of the wise purposes, for which the Sabbath was instituted.

The wisdom and goodness of God, in setting apart one day in seven for our improvement in religion, can never be sufficiently admired. Without this divine institution, the bulk of mankind would continue in gross ignorance of every moral and religious principle; and, probably, would enjoy little or no interruption from the business and toils of life. How careful, then, should you all be, to avoid every encroachment on its proper and sacred employments! The Christian Sabbath tends to polish the manners, to promote the benevolence, and to improve the virtue and piety of mankind; and, by a cessation from labour, and the ordinary occupations of life, it gives rest and com-

* Heb. x. 23—25.

fort

fort to the weary; and affords ease and relief, even to the brute-creation *. Assisted by that sense of religion, which you acquire in the house of God, if in the hour of temptation you should deviate from the path of duty, there is reason to hope that a principle of piety and goodness may restrain you, and you may be enabled, through Divine Grace, to act with propriety for the time to come. But, when once men withdraw their attendance entirely from church, when they neglect the ordinances of Christianity, and despise the most solemn call to devotion, the impressions of religion will wear off by degrees; and, among those who have hardly any other opportunity of knowing their duty to God and man, be assured, there is every reason to dread that, at last, they may become abandoned to profligacy and vice, and may commit the most atrocious crimes. Unhappy men! Let them remember the awful words of Scripture: "They that are far from "God shall perish; but it is good for us to "draw near to God †."—I beseech you, therefore, to be regular in the duties of public wor-

* Exod. xxiii. 12.

† Psal. lxxiii. 27, 28. James iv. 8. Heb. iv. 16.

ship, and to go regularly to church, every Lord's-day, with minds elevated with devotion, and open to instruction. You will find, that the pure and heavenly principles, which are there inculcated, afford the best and most soothing consolation to the human mind, amidst the numberless calamities to which we are exposed.

Public worship, then, is a part, a necessary and indispensable part, of the duties of the Sunday, whatever may be your station in life. This is not all: the duties of public worship occupy only a small portion of that sacred day. You should, therefore, spend the remainder of it consistently with your Christian views and profession *. Festive mirth and secular amusements do ill accord with the sanctity of the day, and with the sacred purposes for which it was instituted. I would exhort you, with great earnestness and affection, to "acquaint your-"selves with God, and be at peace †." At a distance from the tumult of a bustling world, "Regard the works of the Lord, and con-"sider the operation of his hands ‡." In your

* Isa. lviii. 13, 14. † Job xxii. 21.
‡ Isa. v. 12.

walks,

walks, in your conversation with your friends, in your retirement and devotions, by reading religious books, and especially the Bible *, that blessed source of divine truth and consolation; by all these means of reflexion and improvement, you may contemplate the stupendous works of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption. The heavens, the earth, and the majestic river that flows by us, do all display their magnificent beauties to the poor as well as the rich. They bear the most lively and striking impression of the wisdom and goodness of their Maker, and should excite in your hearts sentiments of reverence and piety †; and, even while you are employed on other days in the business and duties imposed on you by your station, you may, from the incidents of common life, and from the wonderful œconomy of Nature, exhibited in the vicissitudes of the seasons, and in the several productions of the year, raise your thoughts to the Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe;—and thereby derive instruction and consolation to the

* 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. 2 Pet. i. 19—21. Rom. xv. 4. John xvii. 17.

† Psal. civ. 24.

mind.

mind. "The Sabbath was made for man *," for the most valuable purposes:—to improve those faculties which are the chief ornament of his nature; to give him time and opportunity to call off his attention and attachment from the concerns of this short and precarious state of existence; and to direct his views to that final "rest, which remaineth for the people of "God †,"—to those "new heavens, and that "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteous-"ness ‡."

Be persuaded, then, on every Lord's-day, to suspend your cares and your business about this life, and to devote it to the momentous concerns of religion, and of *another* life. And, in the time of prosperity, and under all our infirmities and afflictions, let us console ourselves with the expectation, that, when we shall no longer unite in prayer and praises to the great Author of our being here on earth, where our best services are attended with many imperfections,—if we be actuated in our conduct and "conversation" by the principles and duties of

* Mark ii. 27. Ezek. xx. 12.
† Heb. iv. 9. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

the

the Gospel *,—we shall at last be admitted, through the goodness of God, and the merits of our Redeemer, into that *heavenly* Society, where our faculties will be improved, and where harmony and order will for ever prevail; and shall unite with angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in a far more exalted and an eternal Hallelujah of praise †. Amen.

* Psal. xxiv. 4, 5. Heb. iv. 11, 12.

† Rev. ix. 9—17. Heb. xii. 22—24. Matth. viii. 11. Rev. xix. 1. 6.

PHILAN-

PHILANTHROPIC TRACTS:

CONSISTING OF

I.—AN ESSAY ON THE STATE OF THE POOR,
AND ON THE
MEANS OF IMPROVING IT BY PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS,
FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, &c.

II.—RULES FOR FORMING AND MANAGING
FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, TO FACILITATE
THEIR GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

——————— *Alterius sic*
Altera poscit opem res, & conjurat amicé. HOR.

THE SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

ON THE STATE OF THE POOR, AND ON THE MEANS OF IMPROVING IT.

IT is the duty of every member of the community, to use his utmost exertions to promote the happiness of individuals, and the prosperity of the state. Whether the condition of the labouring poor be better than at any former period, I will not take upon me to decide; but, certainly, it is not such as could be wished, on the principles, either of humanity, or of sound policy. It will still admit of considerable improvement, and be capable of receiving great alleviation, under the many trials and difficulties, to which man, in the common and necessary course of human life, must be exposed from the structure of his frame, and the operation of the laws of nature; under those trials and difficulties which press, with so much weight, on the lower orders of society.

Different

Different causes, no doubt, contribute to the distress of the poor, and to the prevalence of ignorance and vice among them; and various methods of improving their condition, and of reforming their morals, may be suggested.—Of these causes and remedies, I will briefly state some, which are very obvious, and deserve to be considered with minute attention *.

I. One cause of distress among the poor is generally attributed to the advanced price of the necessaries of life, and to the inadequate price of labour in some situations. The fact, however, of the reward of agricultural labour not having risen in proportion to the price of provisions, is partially, but not generally, true †. And, it should

* It would be too arduous a task for the Author, and would far exceed the limits of his plan, either to trace, through their various bearings and dependencies, all the causes which have combined to depress the intellects, and to add to the miseries of the inferior classes of society; or to enumerate all the benevolent plans which have been proposed for their melioration and relief. But, amidst a variety of useful publications on this subject, the political enquirer will derive much important information from Davies "On the Case of Labourers in Husbandry;" from Ruggles's "History of the Poor;" from M'Farlan's "Enquiries concerning the Poor;" and, particularly, from Sir Frederic Eden's very laborious and valuable work, "On the State of the Poor."

† See Sir Frederic Eden, *passim*; and Dr. Adam Smith's celebrated treatise "On the Wealth of Nations."

be

be observed, that the burden of poor-rates, and of other parochial and public taxes, has been very heavily increased upon every other class of society.—It may also be proper to remark the impolicy of regulating the price of labour. It seems, indeed, to be impossible, that any legislative regulation on this subject could ever be established; and, were it practicable, it would not be useful: it would suppress a spirit of emulation, and might produce greater mischief, and more sensible inconveniencies, than those which it was intended to remove.

II. Another primary cause of poverty, among many in the inferior stations of life, is their idle habits; and sometimes their want of materials for employment. Every means, therefore, should be used to repress this growing spirit of laziness and improvidence, and to counteract their baneful effects in society. This can only be done, by furnishing employment for the idle, and for those who are disposed to labour; by training them up to habits of industry; and by shewing them, that, instead of being a disgrace and nuisance to the state, the lowest peasant may, by his honest exertions, become virtuous, useful, and respectable.

To effect this important purpose, the principal objects that claim public attention are agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. Of these, agriculture, the parent of rural industry, and the great source of human provision and of national prosperity,

rity, deserves the *first* place on several accounts: it is a most healthy employment; it encourages marriage and population; it leads to plenty, and cheapness of provisions; it increases public and private wealth: and those who are employed in it are observed to be, in general, more peaceable, as well as more industrious members of society, and are less addicted to drunkenness and immorality, to turbulence and faction, than those who are engaged in sedentary occupations. Near great towns, where land has already attained a high state of cultivation, the importance of agricultural improvements will not be so striking; but, as a general object in the system of political œconomy, it merits the utmost attention.

To meliorate the condition of the industrious poor, by facilitating the means of their employment and subsistence, it will, perhaps, be necessary, in some cases, to supply them occasionally with proper materials at their own houses *, according to their age, their strength, and their capacities; and to give suitable instructions and encouragement to

* It is a fact, that the poor are maintained much more comfortably, and at much less expence, at their own houses, than in workhouses, or houses of industry: their children, also, make hardier and better labourers. And many instances might be adduced of the importance of providing constant employment for women and girls in knitting and spinning, &c. But the low rate of female labour is a great source of poverty, and tends to produce idleness.

those

those who are inclined to support themselves by their labour. And it may here be remarked, that, if the poor were thus profitably and constantly employed, they would be almost always enabled to maintain themselves and their families.—Were this principle, then, the fruit of active industry, universally diffused, mankind would see its great influence and importance, in the cultivation and improvement of those arts and sciences, which tend to the convenience, the ornament, and the happiness of social life.

III. A third cause of distress proceeds from some imperfections in the form or administration of the present system of the poor-laws. The poor-laws were humanely intended to relieve the distresses of the lower ranks of people; but experience has shewn that they are extremely defective, in their spirit, and, more particularly, in their execution. They ought, therefore, to be carefully and cautiously revised, and rendered as perfect as the combined wisdom of the legislature can devise: what is useful should be retained; and what has proved impolitic, or oppressive, should be modified, or repealed. In any alteration of these laws, care should be taken, that they promote virtue in general, and particularly temperance and frugality; and that they guard against vice, and especially drunkenness and extravagance: this regularity of conduct will be highly beneficial to the lower ranks themselves, and it

will tend to reduce the excessive amount of the poor's rates.

IV. Other causes of general distress among the poor, are their incommodious dwellings, their want of domestic œconomy, and their unwise attachment to particular kinds of diet and dress. To a feeling mind it is painful to see the miserable cottages of many of the labourers in husbandry, and to think of the high rents they pay for them. On motives merely of humanity, every cottage should consist of a kitchen, a pantry, and three bed-rooms, one for the parents, another for the sons, and the third for the daughters.

It would contribute greatly to their domestic comfort, and to the preservation of their health, if the agricultural poor had a rood, or perhaps half an acre of land for gardens, in which they could raise pease, beans, potatoes, greens, turnips, and other culinary vegetables; and if lords of manors, and men of affluence, would accommodate their labourers and dependents with neat and commodious cottages, at moderate rents. Many important advantages would result from this scheme, if generally adopted throughout the kingdom; and therefore it cannot be too strongly recommended to the attention of the higher classes of society. It must be allowed, that it would be the means of augmenting the quantity, and thereby reducing the price of fruit, poultry, and pork. When a cottager has rather more than a quarter of an acre of land for a garden, it is surprizing

prizing to see the advantages he derives from keeping pigs. He is enabled to pay his rent; with the produce of his garden, his family lives more comfortably, and acquires greater habits of industry and frugality.—This system of erecting cottages, and annexing land to them, if generally prevalent, would not only reduce the poor's rates, but would render labourers more attached to their country, when they possess a portion of its property and soil. Besides, by increasing a poor man's garden, you add greatly to his comfort; and as, in most parishes, at a distance from populous towns, there is, usually, waste and unproductive land contiguous to the cottages of the peasants, let a small portion of this ground be allotted to the industrious labourer, and he will devote his hours of leisure to its cultivation. As an encouragement to industry, those who bring up the most numerous families of children decently and creditably, without parochial aid, might have two or three acres of grass-land let to them, at a small rent, to enable them to keep a cow. This would be a material advantage to them *.

And this leads me to remark, that it might be advisable that clauses be inserted in all bills for the inclosure of parishes, directing the commissioners

* See the second, third, and tenth Reports of the Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor. All the Reports of the Society, and the observations arising from them, are extremely judicious and valuable.

to allot about half an acre to every owner of cottages, and to be as contiguous to them as possible; with a compulsory clause, that those allotments of land shall be for ever enjoyed by the respective occupiers of the cottages.—Provision might also be made for erecting a few cottages of a certain value, with some land annexed to, and inseparable from them, to be bestowed on the most industrious and deserving poor.—And the commissioners should be directed to allot a certain number of acres from the waste, to be vested in the lords of the manors, the minister, and churchwardens, for the time being, and to be let by them by public auction for twenty-one years; the rents and profits to be laid out in the purchase of fuel for the poor, to be distributed among them in such proportions, and at such times, as the trustees shall think proper.—Where two or more parishes unite in obtaining leave to inclose, a wind-mill might be erected for the use of the parishioners, and all the poor who reside in these parishes should have their corn ground at it for a trifling expence. By these means, the industrious labourer would enjoy much greater benefits from an inclosure, than he can while the commons and wastes continue in an unproductive state.

But I shall only observe further on this topic, that the proprietors of land have it much in their power to alleviate the condition of poor farmers and day-labourers; and, by directing and assisting their

their industry, to render themselves and their dependents happy and useful to each other.

2. If the habitations of the labouring poor are thus incommodious, their manner of living in them adds not a little to their distress. It is to be lamented, that they pay too little attention to a judicious choice of wholesome and nutritious vegetables for diet: and hence, whenever there happens to be a failure of that particular crop of grain, which constitutes their principal food, their distress surpasses all description. Now, it would tend to alleviate their hardships, if they made their earnings more productive by good-management, by selecting cheap and palatable articles of diet, and by preparing different kinds of savoury soups *.

The poor are often blamed for their attachment to wheaten bread, and their fondness for tea. It is said, and not without reason, that, by drinking tea, instead of home-brewed beer, their bodies become enervated, and their constitution is debilitated. It ought, however, to be remarked in their behalf, how natural it is for those, who enjoy so few comforts in life, and are exposed to so many difficulties, to endeavour to procure the best bread; especially as they are seldom able to purchase meat.

* See Count Rumford's interesting "Experimental Essays," for improving the domestic œconomy of the poor.

On the means of diminishing the consumption of *fuel*, which is so important an article to the lower classes, his remarks claim particular attention.

And it may be remarked, that the high price of malt prevents them from brewing their own beer, as they did formerly; and this is a hardship, which drives many of them to the public-house *.

If

* It is unnecessary to observe, that the present season *peculiarly* calls for a spirit of pure and active benevolence towards the lower ranks of the community. It is not only our charitable contributions which they require, but also our superintendance and assistance in devising the most effectual methods of giving them adequate relief. It should therefore be the object of the higher classes of society to convey to them that assistance in ways that are least liable to abuse, and in such a manner that the poor may be led to co-operate with the kind exertions of the rich, by applying the relief that is afforded to the best advantage. And it is earnestly recommended to all private families, during the present juncture, to practise the strictest and best regulated œconomy in the use of every article of provision, but especially in the important article of flour and bread, by introducing into their diet such wholesome substitutes as may diminish the consumption of them.

From a conviction that in these general and obvious remarks, I am anticipated by those, who feel an interest in the welfare of their fellow-creatures, I shall briefly state how the industrious poor may derive timely relief, during the present excessive dearness of bread and fuel.——Let a sufficient fund be raised in every parish, and applied, under the direction of a committee, to three purposes, First: To purchase rice, which is known to be the most nutritious of all farinacious food. For, it appears from the third Report of the Society *for bettering the Condition of the Poor*, that "during the scarcity of wheat, in July 1795, one of "the measures adopted at the Foundling Hospital, with a view "of lessening the consumption of flour, was the substitution of "rice-puddings for those of flour; which, by the table of diet,

"were

If what is here suggested were carried into general practice, it would be attended with the most beneficial effects: their houses would be more commodious; their mode of living would be greatly improved; they would be gradually attached to a cheaper, a more nutritive, and wholesome diet; their constitutions would be invigorated; their manners would be rendered more gentle and

" were used for the children's dinner twice a week. The flour-
" puddings, for each day, had taken about one hundred and
" sixty-eight pounds weight of flour; the rice-puddings, substi-
" tuted in their place, required only twenty-one pounds of rice,
" to make the same quantity of pudding; the result of the ex-
" periment being that, in a baked pudding made with milk,
" one pound of rice will go very nearly as far, as eight pounds of
" flour." Secondly: to purchase a quantity of coals, and retail them to the industrious poor at reduced prices. Were a proper stock laid in, at the season of the year when this necessary article of life is generally the cheapest, great relief might be afforded to the poor, without incurring much loss to the subscribers. And thirdly: To provide a public kitchen for making soup, and selling it at a moderate price. From this excellent establishment, properly conducted, the greatest benefits are likely to result. It seems to be the most effectual means of meeting the present calamity, of reducing the price of bread, of gradually introducing a valuable improvement in the diet of the labouring poor, and of teaching them better and more frugal habits. Thus, if the different ranks of life are attentive to the duties of their respective stations, a temporary scarcity may be rendered, by the over-ruling providence of God, the means of extensive and permanent benefits to a very numerous and deserving class of society.

humane;

humane; permanence of property would be acquired; and, what is very important, sentiments of mutual good-will would be excited among the different ranks of society. To which we may add, that, with these domestic comforts and improvements, the poor would not be so apt to debase their moral faculties by vicious habits, but would acquire a higher sense of character, and would be gradually brought to a more sober and orderly way of life.—This leads me to observe,

V. That the great number of public-houses, and the irregular manner in which they are conducted, prove most pernicious to the health, the œconomy, and the morals of the poor, and may be reckoned one of the chief sources of their misery. Nor need this be wondered at, when we consider, that the most nefarious practices are either planned or perpetrated in them. To these houses you may trace almost every vice which becomes a disgrace and nuisance to society. For the poor, who are not burdened with very large families, only require sobriety and common industry to live comfortably; but, when these virtues are wanting, and they once acquire the ruinous habit of frequenting public-houses, which are often schools of idleness and vice, they meet with profligate companions, who, by degrees, extinguish every virtuous and honest principle, and at last render them totally depraved.

In

In a populous city, the baneful effects of public-houses, though they be of the most serious nature, are not always so visible to a common observer, as in a country village. But it is impossible to describe, or even to imagine, how the morals of the lower classes of society are corrupted, how industry is checked, how agriculture and manufactures are retarded, and how many virtuous wives and innocent children are neglected and abandoned, in consequence of the enticements, which are everywhere held forth to labourers, to spend their earnings, and drink intoxicating liquors at the ale-house.

An obvious and important method of giving an effectual check to this alarming evil would be, to diminiſh the number of public-houses, and to see that they be well regulated, and be kept by men of decent manners, as well as of some property and responsibility. For this purpose, magistrates should refuse to license houses where they are not absolutely wanted, and where good order and regularity are not enforced: they ſhould also limit the number in each district. From such regulations as these, thus carried into execution, the temptations to impiety and licentiousness would be reduced, and the most salutary effects, on the industry and sobriety of the poor, would result.

VI. In enumerating the various causes of misery among the inferior classes of the community, it is with

with deep concern I must mention their moral depravity, and their extreme backwardness to receive instruction; consequently, their general ignorance, and, what is frequently the result of it, their unconquerable dispositions to a life of idleness and dissipation. Many of them are so debased in their minds, so profligate in their manners, and so dissolute in their pursuits, that great pains should be taken to repress their alarming depravity, and to adopt such means as may correct the morals, and improve the intellects of the people *. It is, therefore, earnestly recommended to the public, to establish Parochial Schools for educating the children of the poor, and for training them up with particular attention to the duties of morality and religion.

Where Sunday-schools are properly established, and constantly inspected by the resident minister, they will be extremely useful, in rescuing many from ignorance and vice, and in diffusing, more widely, the genuine principles of the Gospel. But this is a partial advantage; in many parishes there are no such institutions, and the poor are often unable to pay for the education of their children. Some more general plan is therefore wanted, by which all the most indigent, the most illiterate, and the most

* Examples, however, of immoral conduct are not confined to the *lower* classes of the people; they pervade all ranks. The poor naturally adopt the sentiments, and imitate the manners, of the rich; and in nothing more than in profligacy and impiety.

wretched

wretched classes of society, may be taught to read, and be instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity. This, besides other unspeakable advantages, would prepare them for those public instructions from the pulpit which, for want of such previous culture, cannot be so well understood, or so deeply impressed on the mind. An institution of this sort, by which the rising generation might be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, is a national object of the greatest magnitude. With the assistance of Sunday-schools, it would prevent many wrong habits in early life; and it would gradually and effectually remove that extreme ignorance which disgraces the lower orders of the community, and, no doubt, adds much to their immorality. Of such importance is the establishment of Parochial Schools, that, I am persuaded, the children in the inferior ranks cannot, by any other plan, be so effectually and so extensively trained up to the business and duties of human life.

Without entering into the particular manner of accomplishing this design *, it may be observed, that persons, properly qualified, ſhould be appointed with adequate salaries, which might be paid by a pariſh rate; and their chief object should be, to

* See Dr. Chapman's excellent treatise on Education, 5th edit. to which are subjoined some useful observations on the instruction necessary for the lower ranks of the people; on the appointment of parochial ſchool-maſters; and on the encouragement they ought to receive.

teach

teach children to read and write, to give them practical instructions, and to direct and superintend their conduct. There is no reason to be alarmed at the expence, as much larger sums are annually raised for less beneficial purposes. In Scotland and Switzerland, which are poorer countries than this, Parochial Schools are established, and have been productive of the most general good effects. Part of the expences should be defrayed by the parish; and part of them by the parents. The terms for teaching to read, and for explaining the Church-Catechism, should be so moderate, that even a common labourer may afford the expence of giving his children these most essential branches of education.

It is here to be remarked, that all young people require some recreation for the benefit of their health. This recreation should have in view the occupations for which they are probably designed. It is worthy, therefore, of remark, that the utmost attention should be paid to early industry. To this end, during the intervals of public instruction, their time should not be entirely wasted in unprofitable diversion. In the country, they might, according to their age and ability, be gradually inured to the business of agriculture; and in towns, to the easiest operations of manufactures.

By thus training the children of the poor to early habits of industry, piety, and morality, a perfect system

system of education would be produced; and they would, thereby, be qualified for the arduous duties of social and active life. By establishing proper salaries for parochial teachers, and by infusing into the young mind those virtuous and Christian principles which the institution of Sunday-schools has a tendency to promote, we shall have no longer occasion to complain of the idleness, the dishonesty, and the turbulence of the poor. With these means of instruction, and of reformation, applied to the mass of the people, they would, by degrees, be formed to useful labour, to a Christian temper, and to the practice of those momentous duties which we owe to God and man.

Thus a most important change would soon be effected in their *manners*, and in their *morals*. Thus a sense of religion, and all the good effects of it, would insensibly arise, and be gradually increased among the poor. They would begin to raise their drooping spirits, and to acquire more animating views of Providence, of religious and moral obligation, and of the great end for which they were sent into the world. Ignorance, immorality, and superstition, would give way to knowledge, virtue, and truth; and mankind would be convinced, that religion does not consist merely in external forms and ceremonies, but—in self-government, in benignity, in "worshipping God in spirit and in truth"—and in discharging with fidelity the duties of their respective stations.

With

With regard to the instruction of the female sex, I shall only remark, that, in every civilized country, even the lowest classes should not only be taught to knit, to spin, and to sew, but also to read the Bible, and to understand the important truths of Christianity. The utmost pains should be taken, to shew them that virtue and vice are essentially different; to inspire them, in early life, with the love of the one, and to guard them against the seductions of the other; to warn them of the dangers of bad habits, and of bad company; to point out to them the happiness which naturally attends innocence, modesty, and good conduct, and the misery which inevitably follows impropriety of behaviour, profligacy of manners, and loss of reputation. Young women on their entrance into life cannot be too much guarded against seduction; nor can their minds be too strongly fortified, by religious principles, against those ensnaring temptations, to which, at that early period, they are peculiarly exposed; for, unless virtuous and religious habits are then formed, they are seldom acquired afterwards; and it is obvious, that a train of the most grievous and complicated evils must ensue, when once a woman loses her virtue and chastity, and debases her character by dissolute manners, and a criminal life. Hence, as the crime of seduction produces the most serious mischief in society, it deserves a very severe punishment.

My

My subject has only led me to offer some hints concerning the nature and degree of instruction necessary for those who are probably destined by Providence to fill the lowest ranks of life, and must labour for their daily subsistence. But, as it refers to an object of great and general importance, I must be permitted to observe further, that, in the prevailing system of modern education, there is an essential defect: the attention of the teacher is not sufficiently directed to the culture and improvement of the mind; the morals of the children are often neglected; and the primary objects of education,—the inculcating of virtuous and religious principles, and the enforcing of them by proper discipline,—generally occupy little attention, both in public and in private schools. But, high as our esteem should be for classical, scientific, and philosophical pursuits, and for those ornamental acquirements which contribute to the innocent amusement of domestic life; yet the chief solicitude of every parent who believes in a future state should be, to preserve the innocence, to cultivate the understanding, and to govern the passions, of his children. And, indeed, we may look in vain for a reformation of manners in society, while religious impressions, and moral habits, in educating our youth of both sexes, are so much neglected.

I have dwelt thus long on this interesting subject, from a conviction, that the right education of youth would be productive of the most beneficial conse-

quences; that it would be the most effectual means of promoting the best and most important interests of mankind; and that the poorer classes of society are entitled to the attention and assistance of the more opulent.

VII. Another great cause of distress among the poor, and the last I shall mention, is their general improvidence in the early part of life. To counteract this want of œconomy and of prudence, which leads many of them to make little or no provision for the various accidents and calamities to which human nature is continually exposed, and to inspire the lower orders with manly sentiments, no method appears so well calculated as the general diffusion of *Friendly Societies*. To these beneficial institutions, then, I shall now call the reader's serious attention, and shall evince, that, if properly encouraged, and duly regulated, very solid benefits, indeed, might be derived from their extension.

There is something in the very name peculiarly congenial to the benevolent and social nature of man, exciting his compassion for his fellow-creatures in the hour of sickness and distress, and leading him to sympathize with them under all their afflictions. Some plans, which have been devised for the maintenance of the poor, have a tendency to depress energy, and to promote idleness, and inattention to futurity; but it is to the credit of these

these Friendly Societies, that they have industry, foresight, and philanthropy, for their basis.

A poor man, by paying three-pence, or four-pence *per* week, while he is young and in health, is entitled to relief in the time of sickness, and under the infirmities of old age, and secures a decent provision, which renders him independent. By this means, he is exempt from those anxious and desponding moments, which reflections on the uncertainty of health, and the dread of accidents and want, might otherwise occasion. The payments are so trifling, that he does not feel himself deprived by them of any domestic comfort; and they prove to be the happy means of making him more industrious, more prudent, and more virtuous.—Let us here appeal to a few facts, which are of a very interesting nature, and well merit an ample discussion.

There are two Friendly Societies at Sunbury, each consisting of about 60 members. They are both in a flourishing condition, and have some property in the funds; a circumstance which tends to attach them to the established government. One of them was instituted in December 1773, and has now (January 1800) in the 4 *per cent. Consols.* £.725; and the other, instituted in 1787, has, in the 3 *per cent. Consols*, £.400. It is unnecessary for me to mention all the rules that are established by these Friendly Societies; but, for the information of those who are unacquainted with the nature and design of such useful institutions, I shall here state some of

the most important, and refer the reader to the annexed rules of a Friendly Society.

The rules of the societies are nearly the same. In the oldest club, no one is admitted a member who is not in good health, and (formerly) between 18 and 40 years of age: now it is limited from 18 to 30 years. The terms of admission were originally 2*s.* 6*d.* but are since raised to 10*s.* 6*d.* Every member, who is not incapacitated by illness or old age, pays one shilling and threepence *per* month; the threepence for beer, and the shilling for the relief of those who shall be sick, lame, or blind. But he can derive no benefit from the fund till he hath subscribed to it two years; after which, during illness and inability to work, he receives seven shillings *per* week. The members have lately given nine shillings *per* week to sick members, and have paid 1*s.* 4*d.*; their disbursements, however, have been so great, that it is hoped they will soon come to a resolution, either to pay 1*s.* 6*d.* into the box, instead of 1*s.* 4*d.* or to reduce the allowance to sick members. On the death of a free member, seven pounds are allowed to defray the expences of his funeral, and for the benefit of his widow, or nearest relation: on these occasions, each member pays a shilling for the farther support of the society. And, on the death of a free member's wife, two pounds are allowed towards the funeral-expences.

To

To guard against frauds and idleness, it is found necessary, that the weekly allowance to sick members should be rather less than their usual earnings. Time, and the public attention, it may be hoped, will correct many errors, and lead to much improvement, in the regulation of Friendly Societies. It is to be regretted, that the public have hitherto obtained so little information on this interesting subject. By comparing various particulars, which old established clubs could furnish, it might be calculated, with greater precision, whether the allowance be in proportion to the contributions, or where any defect has originated. Neither of the societies at Sunbury has been instituted so long, as to enable me to give all the information which could be wiſhed; I flatter myself, however, that the following statement, from the oldest club, will not be unacceptable to the reader, as it will help to establish some useful documents, and may encourage the gentry, tradesmen, and farmers, in other parishes, to become honorary members of such valuable institutions. It is, in fact, their wisest policy, and that for more cogent reasons than need be mentioned.

An Abstract of the Subscriptions, and Disbursements, in the Friendly Society held at the White-Horse, Sunbury, from December 1773 to January 1800.

Years.	No. of members.	Deaths of members.	Deaths of members wives.	Subscriptions and fines. £. s. d.	Subscriptions of honorary members. £. s. d.	Payments to sick; and at funerals, &c. £. s. d.	Savings. £. s. d.	State of the fund. £. s. d.
1774	48	—	—	28 15 8	— — —	* 5 8 3 9½	20 11 10½	20 11 10½
1775	51	—	—	42 19 3	— — —	* 8 15 4	34 3 11	54 15 9½
1776	59	—	1	39 3 1	— — —	6 1 9	33 1 4	87 17 1½
1777	60	—	1	38 12 1½	— — —	21 2 8	17 9 5½	105 6 7
1778	60	—	—	40 12 6	1 1 0	15 16 6	25 17 0	131 3 7
1779	61	—	—	46 4 9	3 3 0	12 10 11	36 16 10	168 0 5
1780	61	—	1	41 4 9	1 1 0	20 3 9	22 2 0	190 2 5
1781	61	1	—	46 7 6	† 10 10 0	30 7 10	26 10 1	216 12 6
1782	61	—	—	48 0 11½	3 3 0	21 8 1	29 15 10½	246 8 4½
1783	61	—	—	48 4 7	2 2 0	25 13 4	24 13 3	271 1 7½
1784	61	—	1	61 5 0	3 3 0	23 5 8	41 2 4	312 3 11½
1785	61	—	1	63 8 7	2 2 0	65 2 8	0 7 11	312 11 10½
1786	61	—	2	53 5 0	2 2 0	24 16 3	30 10 9	343 2 7½
1787	62	—	2	61 12 6	2 2 0	38 10 5	25 4 1	368 6 8½
1788	61	2	2	63 7 7½	3 3 0	44 11 7½	21 19 0½	390 5 9
1789	62	—	—	56 5 5	3 3 0	28 11 9	30 16 8	421 2 5
1790	61	—	—	58 19 10	3 3 0	27 12 9	34 10 1	455 12 6
1791	61	1	—	52 5 9	5 5 0	52 4 5	5 6 4	460 18 10
1792	61	2	1	60 11 5	4 4 0	62 4 10	2 10 7	463 9 5
1793	60	—	1	59 14 11	4 4 0	62 9 0	1 9 11	464 19 4
1794	59	—	1	69 16 5	4 4 0	38 4 8	35 15 9	500 15 1
1795	58	1	—	59 11 3	3 13 6	35 19 6½	27 5 2½	528 0 3½
1796	57	1	—	60 17 5	7 7 0	43 8 11½	24 15 5½	552 15 9
1797	57	0	3	64 4 5	7 7 0	33 15 10½	37 15 6½	590 11 3½
1798	58	—	—	70 — 1	2 18 6	61 1 2½	17 17 4½	608 8 8
							Deficiency.	
1799	59	3	1	69 11 7	12 12 0	107 11 7	25 18 0	582 10 2‡
					£.107 13 0			

* No allowance to sick members the first and second year; these sums were for articles, books, box, clerk, &c.

† Lord Hawke left a legacy of five guineas.

‡ This has purchased, at different times, £.725 stock in the four *per Cents.*

From

From this statement it appears, that our subscriptions, as honorary members, have amounted to £.97 13*s.* 0*d.*, and, though the funds of the society are not yet stationary, that the expences of supporting sick members have, of late, increased much more rapidly than at first. The reason is obvious: some of the members are beginning to decline into the vale of life, and consequently require more frequent relief than they did when they were in the vigour of manhood. It is, therefore, probable, that, twenty or thirty years hence, the fund will be lower than at present; though, there is reason to hope that, with prudent management, it is founded on principles which will secure its permanence and success *.

To shew the utility of Friendly Societies in reducing the poor's rates, it will be only necessary to observe, that, by taking an average of the six years, previous to their institution at Sunbury in 1773, when provisions were much cheaper than at present, the poor-rates were 2*s.* 9*d.* in the pound; sometimes they were as high as 3*s.* 6*d.* But, as the societies began to flourish, a gradual reduction has taken place; and, by their combined effects, the poor-rates have been as low as 1*s.* 6*d.*; and, during the six years previous to 1796, never higher than

* As the other society has only been instituted a few years, it seems unnecessary to give an abstract of the state of its funds; it consists almost entirely of young members, and meets with similar encouragement from honorary subscribers.

1*s.* 9*d.* Now, many of the members are so indigent, that, if they happen to be ill for a short time, and are thereby rendered incapable of following their business, they must inevitably apply for *parochial* relief, had they not recourse to a fund, which their own industry, their œconomy, and their honest pride, have contributed to raise.

That Friendly Societies, then, tend considerably to the relief and support of the poor is obvious; and their establishment is no less useful to the public than beneficial to the members who compose them. When the morals of the lower ranks of society are more reformed, and their children are better instructed, a greater degree of industry and temperance will arise among them, and they will feel more sensibly the degradation of trusting to the support of parish-relief. It seems that these institutions have already had something of this effect at Sunbury, and may partly account for the rates being so moderate.

In favour of poor-rates and work-houses it may be alledged, that they are useful, as they have afforded relief and an asylum to orphans, to the aged, to the helpless, and to the disabled,—to those who otherwise might possibly have perished through want, or might have been reduced to the utmost distress: that they oblige the rich, the inconsiderate, and the avaricious, as well as the liberal and the humane, to contribute according to their abilities, or to the rent of the houses and grounds they

occupy; and, though abused, as most institutions are, in proportion to their goodness, that they create one most important and essential distinction between the comforts and security of the lower orders here, and in every other country under Heaven.

But, on the other hand, it ought to be admitted, that, in a political view, they are extremely detrimental: they fall very heavy on the middling, and most productive, classes of society; they debase the minds of the lowest, and relax the exertions of honest industry, rendering men less provident, and less attached to the interest and welfare of their families. As the society of workhouses is composed of the worst characters and tempers, it is not to be wondered at, that it should frequently be disturbed by quarrels and contentions. To a peaceable and virtuous mind they always prove uncomfortable situations.

Let it be next considered, that the children brought up in them are seldom so healthy, or become such good servants, or industrious labourers, as the children of cottagers. They have given rise to the Law of Settlements, which is as impolitic as it is oppressive, and has proved a constant source of litigation between parishes, as well as a great discouragement to industry. In this respect, they are found to be extremely prejudicial to the comforts of the poor, and to the interests of society. And, after all, it may even be doubted whether they lessen the number of persons claiming relief.

Objections,

Objections, also, of a *moral* nature, may be justly urged against them, as they tend to diminish private charity, and to make men inattentive to the afflictions of others. Besides, it must be admitted, that workhouses are generally prejudicial to the health, the comfort, and the morals of the poor. They often relax and weaken the principles of natural affection; they lead the lower ranks to use little or no exertions to preserve their poor relations from what ought to be considered as a reproach; and they are so little attended to, that they too frequently become scenes of idleness, and even of vice. They are supported at an enormous expence, and produce —misery and discontent.

Though the sums collected at celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are generally inconsiderable, yet, when they are distributed in a judicious manner, by the resident minister, among the aged and impotent poor, during sickness, and as their necessities may require, perhaps greater benefits are derived from these small contributions, and more important and timely relief is administered, than even by the immense sums annually expended for the support of the parish-workhouse.

To mention but one remark more—Were all Christians actuated by the benevolent principles of their religion, and did all regularly attend the public worship of God, the mode of providing for the poor, recommended by St. Paul*, and still prac-

* 1 Corin. xvi. 1, 2.

tised

tised in Holland, and in Scotland, with the happiest effects,—by making weekly collections in the churches, and by private donations,—is preferable to any other that could be devised. But unfortunately,—many of the rich and the great, seldom or never frequent any place of religious worship: and many of them are immersed in fashionable dissipation, and reside at a distance from their estates.

This disadvantage, under which rural industry labours, might be remedied, by an application from the minister and churchwardens in England, as is usual from the minister and elders in Scotland, to the proprietors of houses and lands in the parish, requesting an occasional donation, suited to the necessities of the poor. This would be attended with no expence, and, being considered as a voluntary act, would be chearfully complied with, in preference to a poor-tax, imposed by law, and levied with considerable trouble. On such applications, the proprietors of estates, &c. might meet and tax themselves, in proportion to their valued rents, as is done in many parishes in Scotland; one half of the assessment to be paid by the proprietors, and the other half by the tenants.

But, without entering farther into disquisitions, to which these remarks might lead, I shall only observe, that the poor must become sober, orderly, and virtuous, and must ultimately depend on their own exertions and good management, before any considerable improvement can be made in their condition.

dition. While a man is able, by his diligence and œconomy, to earn a comfortable maintenance for himself and family, he should not degrade himself, by indolence or vice, to the state of a mendicant, and live on the industry of others. But, when he has been frugal and diligent from his early youth, when once disease, infirmities, or age, have rendered him incapable of labour, then, and not till then, ought he to expect support. On these principles, which cannot be controverted, Friendly Societies deserve particular encouragement, as they call forth the best exertions of every individual, and are the chief means of *preventing* poverty.

Both the societies at Sunbury, as hath already been observed, are composed of mechanics, poor tradesmen, and labourers in husbandry. Now, let it be here remembered, as a fact of peculiar importance to the public, and as substantiating a most valuable political truth, that although many of the members are burdened with numerous families, though they reside in one of the most expensive villages in the kingdom, and have no higher wages than others to support themselves, though, like other societies, they be composed of a mixture of good and bad members, though they be liable to, and meet with, the same calamities and accidents which befal others, and, under God, have only their own industry and foresight to depend upon; yet, with all these difficulties to encounter, and while the expences of providing for the poor have been

been almost doubled during the last twenty years,—partly owing to the profligacy and impositions of the poor, and partly to the inattention and mismanagement of overseers; notwithstanding these disadvantages, all the members of these societies have supported themselves and families, and (except in one instance of uncommon distress *), have never received, since their institution, the least assistance from the parish of Sunbury.

The inference then, from all this, is as clear as it is important. By Friendly Societies, and by their beneficial operation, the necessity of poor's rates might, in time, be in a great measure superseded. The idle, the improvident, and the vicious, have been too apt to depend on the parochial fund; but it has proved a dangerous resource, always involving the thoughtless object that relies on it in the deepest depravity and wretchedness. Experience has clearly evinced, that poor's rates have not answered the benevolent purposes for which they were designed; and I am convinced, were they at first limited in every parish, then gradually diminished, and at last entirely abolished, the lower orders of men would live much more comfortably, and much more virtuously, than they do at present.

At the same time, it is farther observed, that, where workhouses have been long established, they ought not to be given up at once, for fear of pro-

* The poor family here alluded to had an allowance of three shillings a week for a few weeks!

ducing

ducing great disorder, and many inconveniences. All that can be expected is, that their abuses may be removed in such a gradual manner, as to create no disturbances; and that overseers be partly guided, for some time at least, by the custom of the parish, till a better method of providing for the poor be adopted, till charity be brought back to its proper channel, voluntary contributions.

This leads me to remark that, in parish work-houses, most of the women might be occupied in carding and spinning; and others, in the manufacture of hemp. But, in general, no employment has been found better adapted, and more easily procured, for the aged and infirm poor, than the picking of oakum, horse-hair, wool, and feathers.—With a view to stimulate the industry and exertions of the poor in work-houses, some share of the profit of their labour should be given to them, if they behave peaceably: in Shrewsbury they are allowed one sixth part; this is also the proportion that is given to the prisoners confined in Dorchester gaol: and it seems to be a sufficient encouragement. In speaking of parish paupers, it is very material to be observed, that a good and extensive garden and field should be annexed to every work-house in the country, in which potatoes, and other esculent vegetables, might be raised; pigs might be bred and fattened; and a cow kept for the use of the paupers, of whom many are always children.

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With respect to the mode of providing for the poor, it has already been affirmed, that, instead of work-houses, which should always be built in salubrious and elevated situations, they might be supported much more comfortably, and at a much cheaper rate, at their own homes, by weekly or monthly allowances. But, in settling this allowance, a considerable distinction should be made, according to the character and circumstances of those who apply for parochial aid.—In the fluctuating state of commerce and manufactures, some will require occasional relief; and, when they are disabled from working by sickness or accident, a provision should be made for them, until thay are restored to health, and a compensation given for medical attendance. But it will be generally found, that most of the poor are able to earn something for their support; so that a very small sum, added to their own industry and sobriety, would be sufficient to supply the deficiency of their labour.

Those who have been notoriously slothful and profligate might wear a badge, and receive an allowance merely sufficient to support them with the meanest provisions; while the aged and disabled, who are of good characters, and have been in better circumstances, should have a more comfortable subsistence. And the utmost attention must be paid by the overseers of the poor, that the allowance to any on the pension-list be diminished, or entirely

entirely withdrawn, as soon as a change of circumstances will admit. This seems to be an essential part of their duty, and to the neglect of it may be attributed the heavy expence of the poor's rates.

To promote order, and to repress idleness and vice, all vagrants and refractory persons should be sent to the house of correction, and confined, for a longer or shorter time, according to the nature and frequency of their offences. With proper attention, these houses might be useful for reforming, as well as for punishing, the idle and abandoned. Though humanity inclines us to pity the distresses, and to relieve the wants, of our fellow-creatures, yet the general interests of society seem to require, that none, who are supported by public charity, should enjoy the same comforts of life as the industrious labourer, or should receive such an ample allowance as to give encouragement to idleness.

It would be of great importance, that a collector, and a treasurer, should be appointed by every parish, distinct from the office of overseer. This would prove a check against impositions and abuses, and might induce men of character and responsibility to become overseers. While this important office requires such menial and degrading duties to be performed personally, it is not to be expected, that men of respectability and independence will generally undertake it. Part, however, of the duties of the overseer, such as the execution of warrants, and the removal of paupers, might devolve

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on the constables or other officers, acting under his authority.

As overseers are appointed for one year only, they have hardly acquired a sufficient knowledge of the characters and state of the poor, when others, equally ignorant, oppressive, and narrow-minded, succeed them. It is indeed greatly to be lamented, that the important office of an overseer should generally devolve upon those, who have neither time, nor abilities, nor discrimination, to perform its duties with sufficient effect. To remedy this evil, overseers ought to be persons of a respectable situation in life, and free from every undue influence; and they might be allowed to remain in office for a longer term than one year, but should be responsible for their management during their continuance in it. Or, rather, might not a committee be appointed by every parish to meet at least once a month, and to superintend and transact all business relative to the poor, and to parochial concerns? Those who are concerned in the management of the poor's funds, should be men of known integrity, vigilance, impartiality, and humanity. It should be their duty to enquire into the situation and characters, and even to visit the houses, of those who either receive, or are likely to solicit, public charity. By this means, a proper discrimination might be made between the idle and worthless, and those who are industrious and deserving objects of compassion. They could thereby judge what relief

they may require, and how it may be bestowed with the greatest advantage. And, once every month, a minute enquiry should be made of the age, the infirmities, the number of children, the condition, and particularly the *earnings*, of all the poor on the pension-list, before the allowance for the ensuing month be settled.

This would soon diminish the number of the poor, and the expence of supporting them. While the impositions of the clamorous and dissolute would thus be checked, the sober and industrious poor would be properly provided for. By making this distinction, we should feel the strongest inclination to give relief to the infirm, the diseased, and the helpless. Such persons have a right to our charity, either public or private. We are prompted by the dictates of our nature, and are enjoined by the precepts of our religion, to acts of beneficence. But, by a poor's rate, what was an amiable virtue, is converted into a burdensome tax.

It may here be observed, that in other countries no legal assessment is established for the relief of the poor: the poor depend on the compassion of their fellow-creatures for their support. In this country then, so eminently distinguished for the number and variety of its charitable institutions, and while benevolence and humanity are, and we trust will continue to be, the characteristic of the British nation, it cannot be supposed, that the industrious, but unfortunate poor, meeting with any uncommon

pressure

pressure of difficulties, would ever be forgotten or unpitied. On the contrary, private individuals would take the utmost pains to find out, and relieve, every deserving object of commiseration; their beneficence would be dispensed with prudence; and a spirit of real philanthropy, and of virtuous industry, would every where revive. The rich would then bestow their charity with pleasure, and the poor would receive it with gratitude.

That the poor may derive the greatest benefit from the liberality of the rich, it is to be observed, that some judgment must be used as to the time and mode of dispensing charity; and proper enquiry should be made for selecting the most worthy and necessitous objects. If a man's station, his avocations, or his health, preclude him from having a general knowledge of the state of the labouring poor in his neighbourhood, let him consult those who are well acquainted with their characters and condition; and let him pay particular attention to their distress in winter, in sickness, want of employment, and old age.

This remark is the more necessary to be made, as charity, indiscriminately bestowed, encourages idleness and dissipation, which are principal causes of the increasing number of the poor. The poor-laws hold out a certain provision for their support, without making hardly any distinction between those who have rendered themselves poor by indolence or vice, and those who are reduced to a state of indigence by unavoidable misfortunes. And hence the most sloth-

ful and criminal are well lodged, clothed, and fed, at the public expence; while the most useful and deserving members of society subsist on a more scanty pittance, earned by their hard labour.

Some have thought that all, who have not large families to support, should be compelled to subscribe to some friendly or parochial club. The idea, however, of compulsion is revolting to the mind. Compulsion would impose a second poor-tax, and that to be levied from a class of men who are least able to pay it. Parliament certainly meant to protect and encourage Friendly Societies by the act passed in their behalf; yet it has excited such alarms among them, that any farther attempts to regulate them might prove fatal to the institution. At present, the members are actuated by a noble spirit of independence, as well as of industry and œconomy; but, if recourse were ever had to compulsive measures, it would stifle every ingenuous and liberal sentiment, and render men mere machines.

Every thing should be done by persuasion and example; and as the farmer is particularly interested in the maintenance of the poor, he has the strongest motive to promote the establishment of Friendly Societies by his advice, and to assist them by his contributions. Such arguments should be used as are adapted to the temper, the habits, and condition of the lower classes of the community, and are likely to stimulate the latent principles of activity

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and industry within them; to warn them of the sad degradation of applying for parochial relief, without absolute necessity; to excite them, in their youth and health, to make a proper provision for sickness or age; and thus to extricate themselves from that debasement of mind, that corruption of morals, and that inattention to future concerns, into which many of them are unhappily plunged.

The parochial clergy, aided by the higher and middle classes of life, might be extremely useful in bringing Friendly Societies into public notice, in explaining their nature, their importance, and their utility, and in thus promoting their general establishment. To their serious and candid consideration, then, these Friendly Societies, calculated, under proper regulations, to answer the most beneficial ends to poor and rich, are earnestly recommended *.

Upon the whole: when we see men so ignorant and depressed as the lower orders of society too frequently are, often indeed in consequence of their own imprudence, their idleness, their profligacy, and their crimes, it is less surprising to find them careless and improvident about the future, negli-

* It is much to be wished, that the Legislature, the Board of Agriculture, the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, or the Society for bettering the condition of the poor, would offer premiums for the best practical dissertation on this important subject.

gent of the great and momentous concerns of religion, and unmindful of a higher and better state of existence. They are often exhorted to go to church, and to attend to the most important subjects that can engage the notice, or occupy the mind of man. But, many of them, alas! are dead to every religious impression, and alive to little, beyond some transient pursuit of gain, or of trivial amusement; so that, when we consider their poverty, and their ignorance,—the wretched state of their bodies, and of their minds,—a benevolent heart will shed a tear over their misconduct, and will use the utmost efforts to correct their vices, to encourage their industry, to alleviate their afflictions, to improve their morals, and thereby to lead them progressively on to higher degrees of civilization, virtue, and happiness.

It is with this view, that these strictures, with the annexed rules, are submitted to the judgment of the public, in hopes they may be useful; and particularly among the author's parishioners, whose welfare he has always had much at heart. Some of them relate to plans of national improvement, and refer to subjects of general importance to society; and others, it is hoped, will prove beneficial to individuals, where parliamentary regulations are not requisite.

The author of these remarks, wishing them to be generally understood, has not attempted to recommend them by deep and abstruse disquisitions, or

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by a high and elaborate style. But, if these hints have any tendency to guard the rich, on the one hand, against oppression, dissoluteness of manners, and a luxurious and thoughtless mode of living, and the poor, on the other, against idleness, intemperance, and discontent; if they have a tendency, also, to promote industry, œconomy, and foresight; to dispel ignorance, to enlighten and humanize the mind, and to excite men to the faithful discharge of the functions of their station, according to their various talents and situations; thus producing rectitude of principle, and a benevolent union between the higher and lower ranks of society, they may be of some moment in the present awful crisis; and whoever treats of these topics, in a manner adequate to their importance, will meet with candour and attention from the public. Nor is the author sanguine enough to expect, that these hints, however conducive to benevolence, civilization, and good government, will be adopted all at once. Mankind are in a state of progressive improvement in knowledge and virtue; but it is by gradual, and oftentimes by imperceptible means, that beneficial changes are effected.

Thus, by considering the external, and then the internal, condition of man, it appears, that he is commonly the chief author of his own sufferings; and that the greatest calamities he undergoes are principally owing to himself, and to his own mis-

conduct in life. In some cases, however, we have seen, that his distress proceeds from causes which are adventitious; from events, which his prudence could not prevent; and from dispensations of Providence, which his wisdom could not controul. And in a few instances, these causes may be so combined, as to leave it doubtful, whether he is most to be pitied, or to be blamed. But, whether the distresses of mankind arise from natural or from moral causes, from the unavoidable calamities of life, or from the evil of sin, God has mercifully provided remedies by the consolations of religion. Christianity peculiarly claims our regard, as it accommodates itself, with great benignity, to our frailties and errors, and to the various instances of worldly affliction, administering consolation to us under our temporal or our spiritual distresses. The discoveries of Christianity are emphatically styled "glad tidings to the *poor* *," to the indigent and illiterate, to those who are destitute of worldly riches, or of religious knowledge. Our religion shews us, that we are always under the protection of a wise and good Providence, and diffuses a spirit of contentment, resignation, humanity, and piety, over all who sincerely embrace it. It has taught men to love each other, by inculcating this sublime and benevolent doctrine—That we are all children of the same Heavenly Parent, all liable to the same

* Luke iv. 18. Luke ii. 10, 11; and viii. 1.

accidents,

accidents, and all accountable for our conduct to the great Author of our being. It is peculiarly calculated to soothe the mind, when labouring under sorrow and the impressions of guilt, and enables us to bear with patience and fortitude whatever trials Providence may see fit to appoint. To the penitent and sincere, whose hearts are softened and improved by affliction and a sense of duty; to the poor and the rich, who are actuated by the great principles of our religion; it gives the animating prospect of a blessed immortality, of a happy cessation from all moral disorders, and of perpetual rest from the troubles and vicissitudes of human life.—But to return to the subject of Friendly Societies.

Before I conclude, it may be proper to offer a few remarks on *Female* Benefit-clubs. All my observations confirm me in my opinion that, in tenderness and benevolence, in sensibility and attachment, in parental affection and solicitude, in delicacy of sentiment, quickness of perception, and purity of conduct, in œconomy, and the conscientious discharge of all the functions of a quiet, a virtuous, and a pious life; in all these important respects, the female character is, in general, peculiarly amiable and praise-worthy; and it rarely happens, that a family falls into embarrassments through the misconduct of the mother.

Providence has, therefore, wisely ordained, that the education of children should, in a great measure, devolve, at first, on those who, by their care,

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their attention, and their manners, seem best qualified to direct it. It is, however, to be lamented, that many of the female poor, being brought up in misery and ignorance themselves, have not the abilities to give all the instruction that is requisite. This disadvantage, which often leads to depravity, and to a wretched contrast to the female character here delineated, would, in time, be happily removed by the means already recommended for diffusing knowledge, for inculcating good principles among the lower ranks, and for rendering poverty less productive of vice and misery.

When a labourer is blessed with a frugal, an industrious, and intelligent wife, he shews his attachment and good sense by leaving all domestic concerns to her prudent and superior management. And he should be thankful to Providence, for bestowing "a help-mate for him," to alleviate the burden and sorrows of life; to participate with him, in mutual interest and endearment, in reciprocal duties, in conjugal affection and fidelity; to be a friend, and associate in health and sickness, in prosperity and adversity; and to co-operate with him, in infusing the principles of virtue and piety into the minds of their children.

The business of Female Societies is generally conducted by rules, in most respects, similar to those in clubs for men. A Female Society, formed on the following payments, and allowances in cases of illness, might be extremely useful among the poor,

and

and would probably flourish; especially under the patronage and inspection of any lady of distinction. The age of admission to be between eighteen and forty; every subscriber, under twenty-five years of age, to pay 1*s.* of entrance-money; from twenty-five to thirty years of age, to pay 2*s.* and 6*d.*; and from thirty to forty, to pay 5*s.*, besides 6*d.* for the articles: to meet once a month, and each member to contribute 6*d.* to the fund.—After subscribing a year, to receive an allowance of 3*s.* a week, during the first three months illness; 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, during the next three months illness; and 2*s.* a week afterwards, while a member is confined to her room, and is wholly disabled from any kind of work.—Every free member, on her lying-in, to receive 10*s.* 6*d.*; and each member to pay 2*d.* to the fund. On the death of a free member, £.2 to be allowed towards the funeral-expences, each member contributing 6*d.*: when the fund is, at any time, less than £.50, every member to pay 6*d.* a quarter extra into the box.—Women's earnings are, in general, so small, that it will be found necessary to make the monthly payments thus moderate; and, as they are more liable to sickness than men, their demands on the club must be proportionably less.

With respect to expences at their meetings, it may be remarked that, in some societies, 1*d.* or 2*d.* are paid by each individual; and sometimes spent in tea. But, when the business of Female Societies can be managed, without incurring any expence,

pence, and their meetings can be held at the house of any of the members, or when a private room can be hired for the purpose, it would be extremely desirable, as the most effectual means of silencing the envy, the malevolence, and the calumny of their adversaries.

In every female club, the following rule should be established and adhered to—"That, if any sin-"gle or unmarried woman should lead an idle, pro-"fligate life, or be with child, while she belongs "to the society, she shall be expelled." Such a regulation tends to promote chastity, and to discountenance immorality and dissoluteness of manners.

Some Female Societies give no allowance to any member during the time of her pregnancy, and for a month after she is confined. I own, I do not entirely approve of the principles on which such a society seems to be instituted; but it gives me an opportunity of suggesting a method, by which poor married women may derive great comfort and relief, at a season too when they are exposed to considerable expence, and require peculiar assistance. I shall not, therefore, from motives of false delicacy, scruple to mention it, but shall readily sacrifice inferior considerations to the desire of alleviating human misery—Let ladies, then, either lend them child-bed-linen, during the month in which they are confined; or, let them supply them with any old linen, with which they may be able to accommodate

commodate them. And let them extend to them that pecuniary aid, which they may then require, and those necessaries and comforts, from which, otherwise, they must be precluded *.

I have often heard the poor speak of this kind of benevolence, as being singularly useful; and have frequently been told, that their condition, from being miserable to the last degree, was rendered comfortable by this timely and judicious relief. It is, therefore, with peculiar pleasure, that this mode of charity is recommended to the attention of those, whose feelings of sympathy are ever ready to commiserate the distresses, and mitigate the hardships,

* I must here be permitted to mention a similar method, which has proved extremely beneficial to the objects whom it is intended to relieve, and might be rendered extensively useful. A sufficient quantity of linen is purchased, and lent to each poor married woman during her lying-in; and about half a guinea is given towards defraying her expences.—The fund, by which this institution is supported, is raised by a subscription of 6*s*. 6*d*. per quarter; on admission, each subscriber pays 7*s*. for the purchase of linen, and one quarter in advance; and any poor inhabitant becomes an object of relief, whether a parishioner or not. So that a lying-in-charity of this sort, conducted by a few ladies, and assisted by the subscriptions of several gentlemen, may be easily established in any parish, and merits the attention of the benevolent.—I shall only add that, as the industrious poor suffer most in winter, it would contribute much to their comfort, if a subscription were raised, or money advanced by the parish, for supplying those, who are old, or burdened with large families, with blankets, during the inclemency of the season.

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of their fellow-creatures. In such employments, so congenial to the natural tenderness and sensibility of the softer sex, female worth and excellence "have," in part, "their reward" in the present sympathetic feelings of their nature—but, a greater and a better is prepared for them in that future state, where the giving of "a cup of water *," the slightest kind office, rendered to suffering humanity, will neither be forgotten, nor unrewarded.

* Matth. x. 42.

RULES

RULES

OF A

FRIENDLY SOCIETY*.

WITH a view to promote benevolence, and to secure mutual relief and support in cases of sickness, accident, or old age, we, whose names are here inserted, agree to the following Rules:

I. This

* The reader is requested to bear in mind, that the Rules are designed for those who constitute the labouring classes of the community: of course, they are adapted, as much as possible, to their sentiments, their habits, their capacities, and their mode of life. As the utility of Friendly Societies depends, in a great measure, on the regulations that are established among them, too much pains cannot be taken to render them as explicit and judicious as possible. The author does not flatter himself with thinking, that the constitution of this society, and the following Rules, though formed after mature deliberation, are free from every objection, or will suit every benefit-club, without regard to the number of members, and to their particular circum-

I. This society shall consist of a president, two stewards, a clerk, and two assistants, and as many members as it may be thought proper to admit; and shall meet, at the house appointed for the purpose, on the first Monday in every month, from seven to nine in the evening, during the summer half-year, and from six till eight, during the winter half-year, when the list shall be called over by the clerk, and all the business relating to the society shall be transacted.

The usual number in Friendly Societies is, perhaps, from fifty to a hundred. But in fixing the number of a benefit-club, attention should be paid to the size and accommodation of the house, where the meetings are to be held. And, to prevent future disputes, it is earnestly recommended to all benefit-societies, to make the rules as clear and judicious as they can, at their first institution; and then, not to alter them on every trifling occasion, as such alterations seldom fail to be attended with dangerous consequences.

II. No person shall be admitted a member of this society, who is not capable of earning one

circumstances and views. He hopes, however, that they are adapted to the general purposes of these excellent institutions; that they may provide for every just exigency; and that they may be beneficial among those industrious and useful members of society, for whose advantage they are principally intended. It may be proper to add, that, where small societies are established, and among the lowest and most illiterate class of life, some of these Rules may be omitted.

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shilling a week more than the allowance paid to sick members; and if it be afterwards proved, that, at the time of his admission, he did not usually earn nine shillings a week, he shall be excluded.

III. Any person, wishing to become a member, is requested to bring or send to the society a certificate of his age, and a proper attestation of his character, signed by his employer, or by two respectable inhabitants of the parish where he resides. When these attestations have been laid before the society, his name, his occupation, and his place of residence, shall be exhibited, in a public manner, in the club-room, till he be ballotted for; and notice shall be given to all the members, that ——— wishes to be admitted, and that his election will come on at the next quarterly meeting.

IV. It is agreed, that all members shall be chosen by ballot; and that no person shall be admitted a member without the consent of three-fourths of the society then present, and who is not in good health, and between eighteen and forty-five years of age.

If any person, on admission, shall produce a false certificate of his age, or character, or have any concealed disorder, and it be afterwards discovered, he shall forfeit all he has paid to the box, and be expelled: and any member who is, or may be, acquainted with such fraud, shall immediately inform the president and stewards, or pay a fine of five shillings.

And it is farther agreed, that every member under twenty-five years of age, shall pay, on admission, two shillings and sixpence to the fund; between the age of twenty-five and thirty, he shall pay five shillings; and between thirty and thirty-five, ten shillings and sixpence, besides a shilling to the clerk, threepence to the house, and a shilling for the articles. Every person, above the age of thirty-five, shall pay twelve shillings for every year he exceeds that period, besides the ten shillings and sixpence of entrance-money, and fee to the clerk, &c.: and none shall be admitted who are above forty-five years of age.

It is found necessary, to make the terms of admission so very moderate, as few would become members, were they required to contribute according to Dr. Price's tables for different ages.

V. The business of this society shall be conducted by the president, the two stewards, the clerk, two assistants, and a committee, who shall be chosen in the following manner: The president shall be elected by ballot at the quarterly meeting, from the list of subscribers. Whoever has the majority of votes shall serve as president for the ensuing half-year, or forfeit five shillings, and shall not be eligible again for the space of eighteen months. If he choose to pay the fine, the person who has the next greatest number of votes shall serve, or forfeit five shillings; and the third, &c. shall be subject to the same penalty.

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The assistants shall serve as they stand on the list of enrolment, or pay five shillings; and when they resign in rotation, they shall serve as stewards, or forfeit the same sum.

Both the stewards and the assistants shall continue in office six months; but those who cannot write shall be excused from serving any office, on paying five shillings each.

The clerk shall be chosen by a majority of the society, and shall continue in office as long as he does his duty, and keeps the books properly. And the manner of choosing the committee, with the purpose for which it is appointed, will be specified in the forty-seventh article.

VI. The office of the president is, to regulate the transactions, and to limit the expences, of the meetings. He is to examine the accounts of the society; to preserve the fund from improper waste; to observe that the stewards and other officers do their duty; and, by their assistance, to keep the society in good order, to demand silence, and to see the reckoning paid. And, if a member apply for relief, he shall enquire into the cause and nature of the accident or sickness, and, within twenty-four hours after such application, shall inform one of the stewards, or forfeit one shilling.

VII. The office of the stewards is, to receive the admission-money of new members and the monthly contributions; to order silence, to pay the reckoning, and to fine any member who transgresses the

rules of the society. They are, by turns, to see, that the sick are provided with proper means of recovery; to visit them, at least, once every week, if the place of residence be not more than three miles from the club-room, or forfeit a ſhilling for every neglect; and, if farther, the sick person shall send, once a month, a certificate of his illness, signed according to the annexed form, before he be entitled to any allowance from the society.

All sick members shall be paid by the stewards what is due to them every Saturday before six at night; and that the president may be acquainted with the number, and state of the sick, a list is to be given to him every week. If neither of the stewards visit the sick, within twenty-four hours after notice has been given to them, if within three miles of the club-room, they shall forfeit one shilling each; and, if they do not pay what is due to every sick member on Saturday before six o'clock, they shall forfeit two-pence for every hour they neglect payment, the fine to be given to the sick member.

VIII. The office and duty of the clerk are these: to keep the accounts of the society; to register the name, the profession, and the place of abode, of every new member; and to do all other business which may be deemed necessary for the order and prosperity of the society. In the course of the last month in every quarter, he is to give timely notice to those members, whose turn it is to serve as assistants,

tants, and to receive their answers. Whoever consents to serve, and does neither appear at the meeting, nor substitute another to represent him, when he enters on his office, shall pay a fine of five shillings.

The clerk is also to summon members to funerals, and on other occasions, as the business of the society may require; to take care, that all fines and contributions, and all allowances to every sick member, be kept separately, that they may be easily ascertained. He is to keep an exact account of the several sums of money received and paid every month; and, at the quarterly and annual meetings, he is to lay the accounts before the society.

He is to receive for salary two-pence every quarter from every member, to be collected by the stewards; and is not to be discharged, without sufficient reason assigned, and that agreed on by a majority of the society summoned on purpose.

The duties of the clerk have been more particularly specified, as the books of Friendly Societies are seldom kept with sufficient accuracy and perspicuity.

IX. The assistants succeed by rotation; and their duty is, to see that the rules of the society be observed, and to give impartially to every member an equal share of liquor.—To the utmost of their power, they shall detect any member who misbehaves; and, if any of them omit to give in his name, the assistant, who was guilty of the neglect, shall pay the same as the offender.

X. The president, the stewards, the clerk, and the assistants, who do not come into the club-room within half an hour after the time appointed for the meeting, shall forfeit half-a-crown each; but, if any of them, being prevented by illness, shall send the key, they shall not be fined.

XI. In case of the absence, illness, or death, of the president, his powers shall devolve on the stewards, by virtue of their office; and they may call in the temporary assistance of any member, till the next meeting of the society.— If either of the stewards or assistants be absent or ill, the next member on the list shall officiate for him till the quarterly meeting, when he shall begin to do his own duty, if his health will permit.

In the absence of the clerk, the president may appoint a substitute; and, on his resignation or death, a general meeting shall be convened by the president and stewards, and another clerk shall be chosen by ballot, a week's notice of the time of election being given to the members.

XII. A box shall be provided with five locks, wherein shall be deposited the books, and other property of the society. Three locks shall be fixed on the outside, all of different wards, the keys of which shall be kept by the stewards and clerk; one inside key to be kept by the president, and the other by the person who gives security for the box. The box shall not be opened, except in the presence of the stewards and clerk, or whom they may

may appoint; but, if any officer shall substitute another, who already has a key, or shall leave the club-room, without seeing the box locked, and the books and property of the society secured, he shall be fined ten shillings and sixpence.

XIII. No person shall be admitted into the club-room but those who are, or intend to be, members of this society.

XIV. If any member shall belong to any other benefit-club, he shall be excluded from this; but, if he choose to pay a larger contribution every month, while in health, he shall be entitled to a proportionable increase of allowance, when he is sick, lame, or old.

XV. Each member shall pay, at every monthly meeting, one shilling and five-pence into the box, and shall be entitled to three-penny worth of liquor *. But it is agreed that, unless a majority of the

* In those parts of the country, where this contribution may be considered as rather too great to be paid by common labourers, a Friendly Society might be established, the subscription to which might be only one shilling and two-pence *per* month; the shilling for the sick, and the two-pence to be spent. In this case an allowance of *seven* shillings *per* week, instead of eight, might be made to sick and disabled members. On the other hand, if, in consequence of the advanced price of provisions, the members should wish to receive *nine* shillings *per* week during illness, they may be entitled to this sum, by contributing one shilling and four-pence *per* month to the fund, and three-pence to the house.

the members be present, only three-fourths of the money to the house shall be expended at the monthly meeting; the remainder, if wanted, shall be applied towards defraying the expences of the annual feast.

When any of the members happen to have a room sufficiently large, it certainly would be much more comfortable, that the society should meet there: and the expences incurred at a public house would be saved.

XVI. In paying contributions or fines at any time, no member shall offer more than five-pence half-penny in copper, under the penalty of forfeiting three-pence.

XVII. The quarterly meetings shall be held on the first club-night after Lady-day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas; and the accounts shall then be passed by the president and stewards, and reported to the society.

XVIII. On the anniversary meeting, which shall be held on the first Monday in June, unless the so-

But *general* tables for settling these payments, and allowances, will not always be correct. Attention should be paid to the age of members at the time of their admission, to the healthiness of the situation, and to the nature of the manufacture in which the members of the society are chiefly employed. It should also be considered, that some places, and some occupations, are much more healthy than others; and that the inhabitants of great towns are, in general, much shorter-lived than the inhabitants of small towns, and of country parishes. Hence Mr. Baron Mazeres and Dr. Price have calculated distinct tables, according to the probabilities of life in London, and in the country.

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ciety appoint a different day, the minister shall be requested to read prayers, and to preach a sermon, at the expence of the society; the parish-clerk to be allowed two shillings and sixpence.

Every member, who shall attend the said meeting at dinner, and does not come into the club-room at or before half past ten o'clock in the forenoon, and walk in an orderly manner to and from church, two and two, according to seniority on the list, and hear divine service (unless he should be prevented by sickness, or object to such attendance from religious scruples), shall forfeit one shilling.

Each member, not receiving any benefit from the club, or otherwise excused by the articles, shall pay two shillings for dinner and liquor. Whoever objects to what the president and stewards have provided, shall forfeit a shilling: dinner on the table at two o'clock. No victuals shall be sent to any person, except to a sick member; and if any irregularities happen, such as embezzling the victuals or liquor, the member, who thus offends, shall be fined half-a-crown. The annual accounts, both in the receipt and expenditure, being first examined and audited by the president and stewards, shall be laid on the table after dinner, for the inspection of the members.

XIX. Every member, within ten miles of the club-room, shall pay his subscriptions and contributions every month, or forfeit three-pence; if they are not paid the second month, he shall forfeit six-

pence;

pence; and if all fines and contributions are not paid at the next quarterly meeting, he shall forfeit one shilling. And it is agreed, that any member, within the said distance, neglecting to pay them on the feast day, or on the monthly meeting before it, shall be excluded. But, if he should afterwards come to the society, and apologize for his repeated neglect, he shall, if he be in good health, be re-admitted, on his paying his arrears and the penalty, though he be superannuated; and, after contributing twelve months more, shall again be entitled to all the advantages of other free members.

XX. If any sick member shall remove into the country for the benefit of his health, or if any member quit his place of residence, he shall, within a month, inform the president or clerk where he is removed, or forfeit a shilling; but, before his removal, he shall pay all his arrears to the fund. During sickness, lameness, or blindness, he shall send a certificate (post-paid), signed by the minister, church-wardens, and overseers of the poor, or the majority of them, and by the physician, surgeon, or apothecary, if any attend him, stating his complaint, inclosed in a letter, according to the annexed form, and, from the date thereof, he shall be paid his allowance.

If his residence be more than three miles from the club-room, this attestation, if required, shall be renewed every month, or he shall derive no benefit from the fund. He shall also inform the society, how

how the allowance is to be remitted to him.—If he remove fifty miles or upwards, he shall be allowed six months to pay his contributions, and, if under fifty and more than ten, he shall be allowed three months. If he fail in the payment of his subscriptions within the time limited, he shall be excluded. If a member die who resides more than three miles from the club-room, his heirs shall be entitled to the allowance which the articles specify, but the members are not required to attend his funeral.—Any member defrauding, or attempting to defraud, the society, by a false certificate, shall be expelled.

XXI. No member shall receive any benefit from this society, till he has contributed to it for twelve months; after which, if by illness or accident he be rendered incapable of following his usual occupation, he shall send a note to the president, in the form prescribed, and he will then be entitled to eight shillings a week, from the date thereof. When the fund of the society amounts to six hundred pounds, and while it continues above that sum, he shall receive nine shillings per week. But it is agreed, that all fines shall be first deducted out of his weekly allowance.—If his illness continue less than a week, he shall be paid at the rate of one shilling and two-pence per day; but, if it be occasioned by quarrelling, drunkenness, or any other disorderly or criminal conduct, he shall, during such illness, derive no benefit from the club.

Members,

Members, when recovered from their illness, shall give notice thereof to the president and stewards.

In country-villages, where the character and conduct of every member are well known, and where impositions are easily detected, it perhaps might be advisable to insert such a rule as this: "Any member, "when he is recovering from a fit of illness, and in- "capable of earning as much as usual, yet able "and willing to do something towards his support, "shall have a weekly allowance, not exceeding four "shillings, and not for more than a month, at "the discretion of the president and stewards, who "shall make report thereof at the quarterly meet- "ing."

XXII. A surgeon and apothecary shall be chosen by the society, to attend the sick and lame members within three miles of the club-room, and a fixed salary shall be paid him for medicine and attendance, to defray which, each member shall contribute one shilling and sixpence to the fund, at the annual meeting.—If any sick or lame member prefer the assistance of any other medical person than the one appointed by the society, he shall pay the expences of his illness himself, but shall not be deprived of the allowance from the club.

Nothing can shew more strikingly, that the public attention has not, hitherto, been sufficiently directed to the encouragement of Friendly Societies, than the injudicious rules by which they are usually regulated. I do not

not entirely allude to the style, in which their rules are expressed; for, among the lower orders of mankind, elegance of language is not to be expected. But surely, as health is an invaluable blessing to the poor, one would expect, that all Benefit-clubs would have been particularly anxious, that every sick member should be provided with proper medical aid. And yet, among all the rules of Friendly Societies which I have seen, I only recollect one instance relating to this important object; though it is obvious, that, amidst the many accidents to which the poor are peculiarly exposed, such a rule as is here proposed seems to be essentially necessary. Indeed, a society, instituted for no other purpose than that of paying for medical assistance would be of great utility. I can, however, easily suppose, that, in some benefit-clubs, the funds will not admit of it. But among other beneficial effects which the poor enjoy, by having medical advice at their own houses, they are taught the advantages of cleanliness, of proper diet, and of well-ventilated rooms. They may also be recommended to the attention of the charitable and opulent in their neighbourhood, and thereby may receive those necessaries and comforts which will essentially contribute to their recovery.

XXIII. If any member should be found begging, or soliciting charity, while he receives benefit from the society, and it can be proved by two credible witnesses, he shall forfeit ten shillings and sixpence.

XXIV. If any member, during the time he receives the benefit of the club, be found at work, or seen drunk, or gaming at any public house, he shall be

be expelled; and if he be not at home, by four o'clock in winter, and seven in summer, he shall forfeit five shillings: and any member who knows the same, and does not mention it at the next meeting, shall forfeit the same penalty.

XXV. Any member happening to be ill before he be entitled to any allowance, shall not be required to contribute his usual payments during sickness or incapacity to work; nor shall he be fined for not serving any office. In all such cases, he shall be considered as an object, claiming the commiseration of every individual in the society.

XXVI. If a member, on the night of his admission, choose to pay one year's contribution to the fund, in addition to his entrance-money, &c. he shall be entitled to, and enjoy, the privileges of other free members.

XXVII. At the anniversary meeting, on the entrance of the president, &c. into office, and on the admission of new members, the articles shall be read publicly by the clerk. The new member shall then subscribe them; and the annexed declaration shall be made in the presence of the society.

XXVIII. It is agreed, that none shall be admitted, whose occupations are peculiarly prejudicial to health, or exposed to unusual casualties, such as painters, miners, brass-founders, workers in white lead, soldiers, and sailors; and whoever shall belong to any of these professions shall be excluded.

XXIX.

XXIX. If any member voluntarily enlist into the army or navy, or be in any way employed in the sea-service, or if he quit the kingdom of Great Britain for more than three months, he shall receive the balance due to him from the club, and shall be excluded. But, if he should be impressed, he shall be exempted from any farther payments to the fund till he be discharged; and then, if he be free from lameness and disease, he shall be entitled to the same privileges as before, on paying his next subscription, within three months after his discharge.

If he be wounded or disabled in his Majesty's service, the allowance, which he had received at different times from the fund, during illness, shall be deducted from his monthly contributions; and the balance, if any, shall be paid to him; and he shall be excluded.

XXX. If any member, or members, shall be drawn for the militia, the money for paying a substitute, or substitutes, shall be advanced from the fund; and every member of this society, who was liable to be drawn, shall pay by instalments sixpence a month, till the whole be repaid.

XXXI. If any member be arrested or imprisoned for debt, he shall be exempted from all payments, but shall not receive any benefit from the fund during his confinement. When he is discharged, he shall not be called on to pay arrears; and, if he die in prison, the same allowance shall be given as to others; the members, however, shall not

not be obliged to attend his funeral.—But, if he be cast into prison, and convicted of felony, or of any fraudulent or dishonest transaction, he shall be excluded from any benefit which otherwise might have accrued to him from the society.

XXXII. The landlord shall accommodate the society with a club-room, and shall provide pens, ink, fire, and candles. He shall also give security for the box, and for any other property with which he shall be entrusted.—At every quarterly meeting, there shall be deposited in his hands the sum of five pounds, to enable the president and stewards to pay the weekly allowance to sick members.

When the stock shall amount to a larger sum than the immediate exigencies of the society may require, it shall be placed out at interest on landed security, or in some of the public funds, and vested in the names of some neighbouring gentlemen, chosen by the majority of members, in trust for the society; and such trustees shall give security for the faithful appropriation, both of principal and interest, to the purposes of the society.

That Friendly Societies should be jealous of any interference in the management of their own property, is not to be wondered at. This jealousy, however, has been carried to such an excess, as to have proved fatal to some of them. Apprehensive that a law might be enacted, which would either affect them, or their property, some societies have preferred private security, and entrusted their money into the hands of persons, where

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it became insecure; and others, elated with the idea of having a club-estate, have made such impolitic purchases of land, or of houses, that the sick members could not receive that relief which the articles had prescribed.—The above rule is intended to prevent any disappointment of this sort.

XXXIII. When the fund of this society shall amount to upwards of two hundred pounds, the sum of six pounds may be lent to any member who has contributed for five years, to help him to purchase a cow; on condition, that he give a promissory note, signed by himself and two housekeepers, to be approved of by the president and stewards, for the repayment of the said sum, with interest, by instalments of at least five shillings per month.

XXXIV. If any member leave money with the landlord to pay his contributions, and they are not paid at the next meeting of the society, the landlord shall be fined sixpence; or, if any member receive money of another member, and he neglect to give it to the stewards, the same penalty shall be incurred. If a member should be excluded by any such omission, he shall be re-admitted.

XXXV. The society shall not be removed from the place where it is now held without cause, judged to be sufficient by a majority of members summoned for that purpose; and if any member propose the removal of the society, without assigning a sufficient reason, he shall pay five shillings.

XXXVI. It is agreed, that this society shall not be dissolved so long as any three members are willing to support it: and any member, proposing to break up the society, or to divide the money, shall be expelled.

XXXVII. If any sick or disabled member have received a weekly allowance for twelve successive months, without intermission, his allowance shall be reduced to four shillings *per* week; but, if he be blind, or totally confined to his bed, he shall continue to receive his full pay of eight shillings *per* week.—If he recover his health, and be able to follow his usual occupation, he shall pay the same contributions as other members.—If it be proved, that he earns, on an average, six shillings a-week, he shall receive no allowance from the society; and, if any member be reduced to half-pay, each member, while the fund is under two hundred pounds, shall contribute to it two-pence *per* month extraordinary.

XXXVIII. If any member be suspected to impose on the society, by feigning lameness or sickness, the president and stewards shall be empowered to call in a physician, surgeon, or apothecary, to examine him; and if, in the judgment of the physician, surgeon, or apothecary, it appear to be a fraud and imposition on the society, he shall be tried by a committee, chosen according to the forty-seventh article. If he refuse to be examined, he shall be deemed guilty, and expelled: the expence

pence of examination to be paid out of the fund.—And if any sick member send notice, that he is able to resume his usual business, with a view to evade the reduction of his weekly allowance, as specified by the last article, he not being recovered from the infirmity with which he was afflicted, such member, on the evidence of a physician, surgeon, or apothecary, shall be deemed an impostor, and tried by a committee; and their determination shall be final.

XXXIX. If a free member remove more than twenty miles from the parish where the club is kept, and find a Friendly Society established in the neighbourhood where he is settled willing to admit him, the allowance, which he had received at different times from the fund during illness, shall be deducted from his monthly contributions; and the balance, if any, shall be returned to him, if he choose it, on the president's receiving from the clerk of such society an intimation, that they will allow him to become a member.

Were Friendly Societies to become general, Dr. Price, in his Appendix to his second volume on Reversionary Payments, has formed some useful tables, shewing the sums payable to members at removals, in proportion to their age and contributions.

XL. It is hereby enjoined, that members at the club shall always behave with decency and civility to each other; and particularly to the president, stewards, clerk, and assistants, shewing proper re-

spect for their offices; or they shall forfeit two-pence each.

XLI. Every member, on his coming into the club-room, shall take his seat, and not walk about the room, or make a noise, or sit before the fire, to the inconvenience of other members. Whoever refuses to take his seat, when ordered by the president, stewards, assistants, or clerk, shall pay three-pence for the first offence, six-pence for the second, a shilling for the third, and half-a-crown for the fourth.

XLII. With a view to promote peace and good manners at all our meetings, and to guard against dissensions and immoral conduct, it is agreed that, if any member come into the room where the society meets, and shall curse, swear, or utter any profane or abusive language, or shall offer to lay wagers, or promote gaming; if he be intoxicated, or raise any quarrel, or challenge another to work, or depreciate his knowledge of his business; for every such offence he shall forfeit six-pence: and if any of the officers be guilty of any of these offences, they shall pay a shilling.

XLIII. To prevent confusion, it is also agreed, that, during any debate, only one person shall be permitted to speak at a time, and not longer than ten minutes, nor more than once on the same subject, except to explain; and he shall address himself to the president. If any two or more attempt to speak, the president shall determine who is to be heard

heard first: and whoever interrupts the speaker shall forfeit six-pence.—Any member refusing to keep silence, when enjoined by the president, shall forfeit a shilling.

XLIV. If any member be guilty of uttering or promoting any seditious language in the club-room, on the evidence of two witnesses, he shall be fined ten shillings and six-pence, to be paid at the next meeting.

XLV. It is agreed, that every subject of conversation, having a tendency to create dissensions in the society, or to be subversive of harmony and good order, shall be carefully avoided. Any member, therefore, who enters into religious or political disputes with his neighbour, shall forfeit, for the first offence, six-pence; for the second offence, in the same evening, a shilling; if he still endeavour to disturb the harmony and good humour of the society, he shall pay, for the third offence, half-a-crown; and, for the fourth offence, he shall be excluded.

XLVI. It is further agreed, that none shall order silence, but the officers or clerk. No more ale, beer, or any spirituous liquor whatever, shall be drank or called for, than the fifteenth article prescribes. If any be ordered, the assistants shall pay for it out of their own pockets.

By these rules, thus enforced, the chief objections that can be urged against Friendly Societies are removed: when properly regulated and conducted, they

neither promote intemperance, nor encourage political debates.

XLVII. As it will be difficult, if not impossible, by any general rules, to meet every case that may occur, it is hereby agreed, that if any dispute arise, which cannot be determined by the articles, it shall be submitted, at the quarterly meeting, to the arbitration of a committee. To guard against secret animosities, the committee shall always vote by ballot, and shall consist of eleven members *; six chosen by the society who are not in office, four by the stewards and assistants, each nominating one, and the president of the society for the time, in virtue of his office. If any member think himself aggrieved by their verdict, he may appeal to the next quarterly meeting, when another committee shall be chosen; but, if the decision of the former committee be then confirmed, the member or members, thus convicted, shall pay double the award.

All honorary members, who annually subscribe one guinea or upwards, and who happen to be in the club-room, shall be on committees; and previous notice shall be sent to them, by the clerk, of the business to be taken into consideration.

In adjusting differences, it will be particularly useful to have the advice of well-informed minds.

* The act, which passed in 1793, for the encouragement of Friendly Societies, requires that eleven, at least, shall constitute a committee.

XLVIII.

XLVIII. A list of the honorary members shall be placed, from gratitude and respect, in the club-room.

XLIX. If the president or stewards embezzle any of the money, with which they are entrusted for the relief of sick members, or for other purposes, he or they, so offending, shall be expelled the society, and prosecuted as the law directs.

L. If the stewards collect bad money, they shall make it good: and any member offering bad money to the stewards shall pay six-pence.

LI. No part of the fund, raised by this society, shall ever be laid out in the purchase of lottery-tickets; and every member, who has had any share in the lottery, or in any other game of chance, since he became a member of this club, shall pay a fine of five shillings.

This article is highly necessary, as every species of gambling proves ruinous to the comfort and morals of the poor, as well as of the rich; and is productive of idleness, poverty, domestic misery, and inevitable ruin.

LII. Any member upbraiding another for having received from the fund any benefit, to which he was entitled, shall, on the evidence of two witnesses, forfeit a shilling; and if he accuse a member of a breach of any of the articles, and cannot prove his assertion, he shall also pay a shilling.

LIII. If any of the society, or the landlord, pay the arrears of any member, with a view to save him from expulsion, the clerk shall give the earliest notice

tice thereof to the said member; and, if he do not re-pay him at or before the next meeting, the member shall be expelled.

Any member attending the society, and not paying his contributions before he leave it, shall forfeit three-pence.

LIV. It is agreed, that these rules shall be observed by the members, while they continue in the club-room, even after the club-hours; and whoever obstructs the clerk, or any of the officers, in settling their business, shall forfeit a shilling.

LV. The president, stewards, and clerk, when they resign their respective offices, shall give up the money, books, and accounts, to their successors; if there be any deficiencies, they shall be made good by them.

LVI. To promote these our benevolent intentions towards each other, and to prevent the box from ever being shut against any sick or disabled member, it is agreed, that if the fund of this society should be reduced, at any future period, to a hundred pounds or under, each member, not indisposed, shall contribute two-pence extraordinary a week towards the support of the club. So that the sum of eight shillings *per* week shall not be withheld from such sick, lame, or blind members, as are entitled to receive the same; nor is the money, for the payment of funeral-expences, ever to be discontinued.

LVII.

LVII. The wife of a free member, having more than two children, under fourteen years of age, shall be entitled to ten shillings and six-pence from the society every time she lies-in, on producing a certificate of their marriage; and every free member, having a wife and two or more children whom he supports, shall, on the death of every child, receive ten shillings and six-pence towards the funeral-expences. And in such cases each member shall pay two-pence extra at the next monthly meeting.

This rule is made with a view to meet contingent expences. The contributions of individuals should be proportionable to the number of the members.

LVIII. If any member, being sick or lame, wish to be admitted into an hospital, the president and stewards shall deposit whatever sum may be requisite for his admission; and the money, so advanced, shall be returned to the society by the sick or lame member when he is discharged, or he shall forfeit double the sum.

And it is agreed, that a free member shall be allowed five shillings for himself and family, while he is in the hospital; and, if he should die there, the stewards shall see that he be decently interred: any necessary expences, incurred by the stewards, to be deducted from the allowance due to his representatives.

LIX. The president and stewards shall not be entitled to any compensation from the society for any

any trouble, or loss of time, they may sustain in the discharge of the duties of their office; but all necessary expences shall be re-paid them every month. And, if any dispute shall arise in settling this allowance, it shall be decided by a committee, chosen according to the forty-seventh article.

LX. If any member of this society shall be inoculated for the small-pox, or shall catch the infection in the natural way, he shall receive the usual allowance, while he is afflicted with it; but, if he die in consequence, only two pounds shall be given by the society towards defraying the expences of his funeral, each member to contribute nine-pence. And it is agreed, that all members, who have not had the small-pox themselves, or who have families of young children, shall not be obliged to attend.—If the child of a member be inoculated, and it should die, there shall be an allowance made of ten shillings towards the funeral; but, if the child take the infection naturally, no allowance shall be given.

This is offered as a means of encouraging inoculation among the lower orders.

LXI. While the fund of the society amounts to two hundred pounds, any member, upwards of seventy years of age, shall receive an annuity of three shillings *per* week; and upwards of seventy-five, of four shillings *per* week; with the privilege of earning what he can for his further support; the members contributing two-pence a month to the fund.

LXII.

LXII. On the death of a member, or of a free member's wife, it shall be the duty of the president and stewards to see that the corpse be interred in a decent manner, and that a sufficient sum, out of the money allowed by the society, be appropriated to the payment of the funeral-expences.—The minister shall have the earliest notice of the death of every member, and shall be requested to preach a sermon, for which he shall be paid by the society.

In some societies, only the officers, and about six members, who take it by rotation, attend funerals. But it may be here observed, that, as these funerals are generally in the evening, they do not interrupt the usual occupations of the members. And, when the societies desire (as they do at Sunbury) that a sermon may be preached, the minister will hardly refuse, for many go to church on these occasions who are irregular in their attendance at other times; and he has an opportunity of directing their attention to some awful and momentous topic, when the mind is more than usually open to receive serious impressions.

When any member dies, the society shall meet, at the time appointed, at the club-room, or at the nearest and most convenient public-house, as the president shall direct, to proceed from thence to the house where the deceased lieth, to attend the funeral to the grave. Each member is to provide himself with hatband and gloves, at his own expence.—The clerk shall write out a list for the stewards

ards and assistants, who shall give the earliest notice to each member of the time and place of meeting; and whoever neglects to attend, unless he be indisposed, or reside upwards of four miles from the spot, shall forfeit two shillings and six-pence.

At every funeral, the members are to spend three-pence each, at the house where they meet. But it is agreed, that, when a member dies of a putrid fever, or of the small-pox, only the bearers shall be required to attend: and no sermon shall be preached.

This is intended to prevent infectious disorders from spreading.

LXIII. It is agreed, that the six youngest members on the roll of the society shall carry the corpse of a deceased member to the place of interment; whoever refuses, if he be not on the sick list, shall pay two shillings and six-pence.

LXIV. And it is further agreed, that, if a member die before he has subscribed twelve months to the fund, two pounds shall be allowed towards his funeral-expences; each member contributing nine-pence to the box at the next meeting. And, at the decease of a free member, five pounds shall be paid to his widow, children, or representative, on the next club-night after the funeral; or two pounds before, if required, to defray the expences; and every member shall pay one shilling and six-pence to the fund at or before the next quarterly meeting.

LXV.

LXV. At the death of a free member's wife, he shall receive two pounds to defray the funeral-expences, and each member shall contribute nine-pence to the fund; but this allowance shall not be paid by the society to any individual more than once.

LXVI. When any member's wife dies, a certificate of their marriage shall be produced before any money be paid by the president and stewards towards the funeral-expences.

Where a society is principally instituted for the benefit of widows, it would be proper to make a rule to this effect: "*If the widow of any member shall live a* "*profligate life, or shall have an illegitimate child,* "*she shall be excluded from every future benefit of this* "*society.*"

LXVII. When a member has been burdensome to the society by long illness, and has received more money from the fund than he ever contributed to it, only two pounds shall be allowed towards his funeral; and each member shall pay nine-pence.

The large sums, which are generally paid on the death of members, and of members wives, seem to drain the funds of Friendly Sotieties too much.

LXVIII. If any member commit self-murder, the other members shall not be required to attend his funeral; and only one pound shall be given towards the expences.—And, if a member should happen

happen to die in a parish work-house, no money shall be paid by the society to defray his funeral-expences.

LXIX. It is here agreed, that all fines and forfeits shall be put into the box.

LXX. It is also agreed, that these Rules shall be exhibited at the next general quarter-sessions of the county, to be examined, allowed, and confirmed, by the magistrates, according to the provisions of the Act of Parliament, passed for the Relief and Encouragement of Friendly Societies, in order to be entitled to that security, and those advantages, held out to us by the Legislature *.

LXXI. Every member shall purchase a printed copy of these articles, for which he shall pay a shilling.

LXXII. Whoever refuses to pay the forfeits which the foregoing rules impose, or will not com-

* 33 Geo. III. chap. 54.

One advantage, arising from having the rules confirmed, and deposited with the clerk of the peace, is, that if any person, intrusted with any property belonging to the society, shall become a bankrupt, or insolvent, the money due to the society shall be paid before any other debts.—Besides this, if the trustees or officers refuse to deliver in their accounts, and to pay the balance to the society, application may be made to the Court of Chancery, where, by the terms of the act, no fee shall be taken.—Bonds are not chargeable with any stamp-duty. And no fee is allowed to the clerk of the peace for registering the Rules.

ply with the laws and regulations of the society, shall be expelled.

LXXIII. The society, whenever three-fourths of the members shall deem it necessary, shall alter, amend, or repeal, any of these rules. But no rule, order, or regulation, shall be altered, rescinded, or repealed, unless at a general meeting of the society, convened by public notice, in writing, signed by the clerk, in pursuance of a requisition for that purpose by three-fourths of the members then present, and publicly read at the two monthly meetings to be held next before the quarterly meeting for such alteration or repeal,—unless a committee shall have been nominated for that purpose, in which case the committee shall be convened in like manner, with the concurrence and approbation of three-fourths of the members then present, or by the same proportion of the committee; and such alteration or repeal shall be subject to the review of the justices at the quarter-sessions, and shall be filed with the rolls of the sessions: provided, however, that no alteration shall be made, which tends to dissolve the society, and affects the thirty-sixth article.

LXXIV. If it should be thought requisite, at any time, to make any additional article, before it shall be valid, it shall first be proposed at a public meeting, and, if approved of by a majority of the members then present, a copy of the article shall be

be written by the clerk, and given to the stewards and assistants, to be sent by them to all the members, that they may have time to consider the propriety of admitting or rejecting it. And if, at the next quarterly meeting, the said article be ratified and approved of by a majority of the members then present, it shall be entered by the clerk among the other articles and regulations of the society; and, as soon as confirmed by the justices, become binding on the members.

LXXV. In conclusion, it is earnestly recommended to all the members of this Friendly Society, to lead a life of piety and virtue, to cultivate a benevolent intercourse with each other, and faithfully to observe the rules that are here established.

THESE RULES, with the following forms, were this day agreed on, by the unanimous consent of the members. In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names.

FORMS

FORMS and CERTIFICATES

to be observed.

First. A certificate of age, to be required of every person at the time of his admission; and, secondly, of character, from his employer, or from two respectable inhabitants of the parish where he resides, in the following manner:

"This is to certify, from our own personal know-
"ledge of the life and behaviour of ———, that
"he is sober, honest, healthy, peaceable, and in-
"dustrious."

Notice to be sent by the clerk, when any person is proposed to be a member:

"You are desired to attend at the next quarterly
"meeting, as ——————— (here mention his name,
"occupation, and place of residence) is proposed
"to be a member of our society, and will then
"be ballotted for."

Form of notice to be sent to the president by a sick member:

"I hereby declare, that I am so much indisposed, "that I am incapable of following my usual em- "ployment."

(The date.) (Signed.)

Form of a certificate from a distant member claiming relief:

"I hereby declare, that I am so much indisposed "(here mention the complaint), that I am incapa- "ble of working at my usual occupation."

(Signed.)

"We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, be- "lieve the above to be true.

"Minister, churchwarden, overseer, "physician, surgeon, apothecary."

(The date.)

Notice to the president from a member who has been ill.

"I hereby inform you, that I am now so far re- "covered as to be able to be employed in my usual "business."

(The date.) (Signed.)

N. B. If a member cannot write, a verbal notice shall be sufficient.

Form

Form of a certificate to be sent, on the death of a distant member, or his wife:

"This is to certify, that ——— died on the "(here insert the date.)

"Minister."

The president's declaration at the time of his admission into office:

"I solemnly declare and promise, that I will "faithfully execute the office of president, and "with the utmost impartiality will discharge the "trust reposed in me, according to the articles, in "managing the funds, and conducting the business "of this society."

The steward's declaration:

"I solemnly declare and promise, that I will "faithfully execute the office of steward, and "will, to the best of my ability, discharge the "trust reposed in me, according to the rules of this "society."

The assistant's declaration:

"I solemnly declare and promise, that I will en-"deavour to detect any member, who behaves con-

" trary to the articles, and will impartially execute " the trust committed to my care."

The clerk's declaration:

" I solemnly declare and promise, that I will " faithfully execute the office of clerk, and will keep " the books and accompts of this society, with as " great accuracy and impartiality as I am able."

Declaration to be made by every member, on admission into the society:

" I solemnly declare, that I am not, to the best " of my knowledge, above the age of ————, " nor under the age of eighteen; — that I am in " good health, and have not any concealed distem- " per or infirmity; — that I will endeavour, at all " times, to promote the peace and prosperity, and " conform to the rules and orders of this society; " — and, if I should be excluded, I will resign my " claim to any property belonging to this club.

" And I further promise, that I will not apply for " relief, except in cases of sickness, accident, ina- " bility to work, or old age; and, if I should be " obliged to have recourse to the funds of this so- " ciety for support, I will use every means in my " power to recover my health, and, as soon as I

" am

" am capable of resuming my usual business, will " immediately inform the president and stewards."

Declaration to be made by members incapacitated by sickness or age:

" I solemnly declare, that I am incapable, by " honest means, of earning six shillings a week; " and I hereby promise that, as soon as my health " will permit, I will inform the president and stew- " ards, and, when able to follow my usual occu- " pation, will not apply for any further relief from " the funds of the society."

IT will be only necessary to add, that these Rules, which are designed for the *general* state of labourers, may be easily varied, so as to be accommodated to the particular circumstances and local situation of any rank in society. The tradesman, the artist, and the manufacturer, whose earnings are considerably greater, may augment their payments into the fund, and thereby be entitled to a proportionable increase of allowance. But for further particulars of plans, for enabling farmers, mechanics, and tradesmen, as well as the labouring poor, to secure a comfortable support for themselves, in sickness and old age, proportioned to their weekly or quarterly contributions, the reader is referred to two valuable works; to Dr. Price's Treatise on Reversionary Payments, the fifth edition; and to Mr. Baron Mazeres, on the Doctrine of Life-Annuities. If Friendly Societies should ever be established in every parish by voluntary associations, their tables would be found to be of the greatest utility and importance.

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